The Historical Jesus and *Mokmin* Hermeneutics with reference to the Description of Jesus in Minjung Theology in Korea

by

Moonjang Lee

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and constitutes the results of my research on the subject. It has not been submitted in any previous application for a degree. All quotations have been acknowledged either by double quotation marks or by indentation. Sources of information, in both cases, have been specifically acknowledged.

Signed

Moonjang Lee

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ABSTRACT

The quest for the contextual meaning of the life and teaching of the historical Jesus seems to be a perennial question. Given the religious, cultural and social situation in Korea as well as in Asia generally, any theological reflection should be both contextually relevant and faithful to the Gospels. This thesis attempts to articulate the *Jongshin* ('Spirit or Teaching') of the historical Jesus, the Master of Christianity, using the concept of *mokmin* ('to serve the people'), which comes from the intellectual heritage of the Korean people, as a hermeneutical key.

In the endeavour to present a *mokmin* perception of the historical Jesus, it is necessary to respond to minjung theology in Korea. Developed in the 1970s and 1980s in Korea when people suffered under political oppression and economic exploitation, minjung theologians found the biblical basis for their theology of liberation in their description of the historical Jesus. They perceived Jesus' status as a minjung, who identified himself with the minjung and denied himself any leadership role among the minjung. This thesis argues that we should not confuse Jesus' being and the character of his ministry. Jesus was not a minjung, but a royal figure. The perception of Jesus' mission as a minjung movement or as a minjung revolt is also refuted. Jesus' mission is characterised by his *mokmin* praxis in that a royal figure sided with the lowest people in the society.

The *mokmin* praxis of Jesus is grasped in three aspects: solidarity with the poor *min* ('people'), awakening the social responsibility in Jesus' community and pedagogy of the oppressors, i.e., the Jewish religious leaders and the rich in the society. First, we observe that there should be no question about Jesus' mission for the poor *min*. Jesus broke the social and religious barriers in Judaism to reach out and side with the poor and suffering *min*, which is most dramatically demonstrated in his healing ministry. Jesus became the source of hope for the poor *min* by taking the initiative in releasing the *han* ('the accumulated grief') of the people. Secondly, Jesus envisioned a society in which no status distinction among its members exists and social justice is established. For this, Jesus selected the twelve disciples as representatives of the community and as

transmitters of Jesus' *Jungshin*, and inculcated them to embody *mokmin* praxis. Thirdly, Jesus demonstrated his intention to be the pedagogue of the oppressors. Jesus consistently challenged the Jewish religious leaders and the rich members of the society to accept his teaching and side with him for *mokmin* praxis. We perceive that Jesus' mission as the pedagogue of the oppressors was even more radical than his gesture to side with the poor *min*, for the cost of Jesus' pedagogy of the oppressors was his life.

What we attempt to demonstrate in the thesis is not only to present an authentic and contextual perception of the *Jongshin* of the historical Jesus but also to expose the failure of minjung theology to present a holistic image of the historical Jesus to the Korean people. (Its historical contribution in Korea to the democratisation movement in the 1970s and 1980s is beyond the scope of our discussion.) The theological significance of this study is that the perception of the historical Jesus as *mokmin* Jesus provides both a biblically faithful and a contextually relevant understanding of the historical Jesus. The broader theological implication of this study is linked with the concerted effort to discover Korean questions and, furthermore, to build a Korean and an Asian way of doing Christian theology.

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AJT	*Asia Journal of Theology*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CJT	*Canadian Journal of Theology*
CTJ	*Calvin Theological Journal*
EAJT	*East Asia Journal of Theology*
EQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IBS	*Irish Biblical Studies*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
NT	*Novum Testamentum*
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, tr. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976)
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*

INTRODUCTION

I. The Perennial Question in the Korean Context

"How can we describe the historical Jesus for us today?" This question may imply two things: first, the description of Jesus Christ should be contextually relevant; secondly, at the same time it should be the faithful re-presentation of Jesus as depicted in the Gospels. In the Korean context, having these two aspects in mind, we can rephrase the question like this: "What is the *Jongshin*[1] ('Spirit or Teaching') that the historical Jesus left for us today?" The present study is to articulate the Teaching of the historical Jesus as perceived from inside the Korean context reflecting on the Gospels, the only recorded source for the task. Our thesis is that the Teaching of the historical Jesus is *mokmin* ('to serve the people') in the sense that he showed concern for the poor and oppressed *min* ('the people'), and awakened the community responsibility to help the poor *min*, and attempted to conscientise the oppressors to side with him in *mokmin* praxis. Here we need to explain why we have to raise that particular question in the Korean context and how we will attempt to answer it. To do so, it is necessary to situate ourselves in the Korean context to identify the hermeneutical ethos in Korea and to find out the proper approach for this task.

II. The Hermeneutical Ethos in Korea

R.S. Sugirtharajah recently edited a book on Asian Christology entitled *Asian Faces of Jesus*.[2] Sugirtharajah arranged the articles by fifteen Asian theologians under two headings: one, "Jesus Amid Other Asian Ways, Truths And Lights" and the other, "Newly Emerging Profiles of Jesus Amid Asia's Poverty and Religious Plurality." If we examine the articles, we will find that the articles in the first section relate Jesus Christ to the major Asian religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and those in the second section place Jesus in the Asian political, economic, and historical context. This arrangement reveals that in Asia even the discourse on Christology has to consider the

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[1] *Jongshin* is the teaching or the guiding spirit that a person embodied through his life and work, which is to be remembered, followed and transmitted from generation to generation.

[2] R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed., *Asian Faces of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1993).

two sides of Asian realities, i.e., the religio-cultural reality and the socio-economic reality. As Korea is not an exception in sharing the Asian ethos as described above, so we need to examine the hermeneutical ethos of Korea in more detail.

II.1 Religious Plurality

In the long history of Korea,[3] Korean people have always lived in the multi-religious milieu. Before Christianity was introduced into the Korean soil, Korean people had lived for a long time under the influence of various religions such as Shamanism,[4]

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[3] The history of Korea can be divided into several periods: 1) The primitive and tribal societies (ca. 1112 B.C. - A.D. 57); 2) the three kingdoms of Koguryo, Paekje and Shilla (A.D. 57-668); 3) the unified Shilla Kingdom (668-935); 4) Koryo Kingdom (918-1392); 5) Yi Dynasty (1392-1910); 5) Japanese colonial occupation (1910-1945); and 6) the division of Korea into the South and the North (1945-present). The modern history of Korea may need some elaboration: With the fall of the Yi Dynasty in 1910, Korea was colonised by the Japanese. After the liberation from Japan in 1945, Korea was divided into the South and the North as a temporary arrangement between the victorious Allies of the Second World War to disarm the Japanese soldiers and to restore a political system. However, Soviet Russia occupying the North set up a communist regime and in the South a separate government was established in 1948. In 1950, North Korea started a war which officially ended in 1953. Since that time, the Korean peninsula has been under a state of truce up to the present moment.

[4] Shamanism in Korea is called *Mu Gyo* ('shamanist teaching') or *Mu Sok* ('shamanist practices'). Shamanism has interacted with other religious traditions such as Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism, permeating into and influencing on them. The characteristics of Shamanism that penetrated deep into the life of the Korean people may be observed in several aspects. First, they see spirits everywhere. Although they had the concept of a supreme god, called *Hannulnim* ('The One in Heaven'; This is the most ancient and most indigenous term for "god" in Korea.), they did not think that they have direct access to this supreme god but worshipped the numerous lesser deities or spirits, for they thought that the supreme god existed too distant to get involved with human affairs. The people believed that the spirits were intimately involved in their everyday life. Thus, every activity of daily life, especially all important occasions of the family or the community life, had a presiding spirit that had to be consulted, feasted, appeased, or driven off. Cf. Hector Diaz, *A Korean Theology: Chu-Gyo Yo-Ji, Essentials of the Lord's Teaching by Chong Yak-jong Augustine (1760-1801)* (Immense: Neue Zeitschrift fur Missionswissenschaft, 1986), p. 131. The relations between the spirits, i.e., *kwishin* and man were arranged by shamans who helped men to be in harmony and unity with spirits and the world. Secondly, the people believed in propitious and ill-omen days, in favourable and unfavourable places. Thirdly, they believed that every event was for them a sign of fortune or misfortune. Thus they regularly contacted fortune-tellers who sacrificed for them, which they did before, during, and after all important actions and enterprises. H. Diaz, *ibid.*

With the influx of Western civilisation, the belief and practice of Shamanism seemed to have disappeared from the life of the Korean people, but Shamanism is still emanating dynamic energy in the depth of religiosity of the Korean people. Shamanism is situated in the mind of the Korean people affecting their value and worldview. In this sense, it will be correct to say that, in Korea, Shamanism is not just an ancient religion that became extinct nor a primal religion suitable only for the primitive tribes, but a historical religious phenomenon that survived in the mind of the Korean people in the form of a folk belief even in this modern world. (*Ibid* p. 16.) We have much evidence which show that shamanism has survived in the minds of the Korean people, exerting a continuing influence even in modern Korea. According to the report of *Kidok Shinbo*, one of the Korean Christian weekly newspapers, dated 20th of January, 1996, some Korean scientists sacrificed a head of a pig at the altar as a form of shamanistic ritual before they launched the second communication satellite at Cape Canaveral, Florida, on the 15th of January 1996. It is explained that the Korean scientists sacrificed a

Buddhism,[5] Taoism[6] and Confucianism.[7] The religious situation in Korea offers a typical example of the Asian multi-religious context in that different religions have co-

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pig's head in a shamanistic way to pray for the success of the communication satellite that had two percent uncertainty against the ninety-eight percent success. The report criticises the sacrifice by the scientist as a hard-to-understand and shameful happening that discloses the primitiveness of Korean people, regarding it as a practice found only in the lowest religion of the primitive tribes. The report also points out the fact that over thirty percent of Christians, including some ministers, visit fortune-tellers. Though the report calls for an urgent education of true doctrine and theological training to stop those vain practices, it fails to notice the significant implication of these phenomena which indicate loud and clear that shamanism is still alive in the depth of mind of most Korean people.

[5] Buddhism was accepted in Koguryo in A.D. 372, in Paekje in 384, and in Shilla in 472 from China. The official recognition of Buddhism brought a new dimension in the religious thought and practice of the Koreans. Buddhism became the religion of the aristocracy with the patronage of the government. During the Shilla Kingdom (668-935) the five Buddhist sects, i.e., *Yul-Ban* (Nirvana Sutra), *Kye-Yul* (Vinaya), *Hwa-Om* (Avatamsaka Sutra), *Bup-Sung* (Dharmata) and *Bup-Sang* (Dharmalakshana) were introduced into Korea, which largely appealed to the aristocracy. Among the masses appeared a new sect called *Chong-To-Gyo* (Pure Land Teaching) which taught that the simple prayer to the Bodhisattvas would bring salvation. This teaching appealed greatly to the people and soon spread throughout the kingdom. Another important thing to note during the latter period of Shilla Kingdom is the appearance of perhaps the most influential sect in the Buddhist history in Korea, i.e., the *S'on* (or Zen) Buddhism. Buddhism became the state teaching during the Koryo dynasty (918-1392). Buddhism was the dominant religion among the officials, and it was not unusual for high class people, including members of the royal clan to become monks. The Buddhist temples gained great wealth, and the monks were exempt from military duty and taxation, thus attracting not only the pious but the ambitious. After the Yi dynasty (1392-1910) accepted neo-Confucianism as the official teaching, Buddhism declined rapidly because of the hostility of the Confucian scholar-officials who regarded Buddhism as a social evil. They laid severe restrictions on the practice of Buddhism, making it unlawful to build temples and limiting the number of monks and nuns. Many temples were closed and the social privileges once conferred to them were terminated. As a result, the social status of monks decreased, and they were maltreated by the *yangban* people. (The social classes in Korea were divided into four: *yang-ban*, *choong-in*, *sang-min*, and *ch'on-min*. The *yangban* class were the aristocrats who monopolised both political power and wealth. The *choong-in*, meaning middle class people, were a small group of low officials. The *sang-min*, i.e., the common people, were mostly farmers who formed the majority of the population. The *ch'on-min*, i.e., the low-born people, were mostly slaves, actors, *mudang* (female shamans), and butchers. For more detailed discussion on the class system during the Yi dynasty, see Chapter One.) But it should not be assumed that Buddhism lost its influence in the life of the Korean people, for the largest proportion of the population confess themselves to be Buddhists.

[6] Taoism was first introduced into Koguryo in 624 by the Chinese king Kao-tsu (618-627) of Tang dynasty in China. Though it never became a distinct cult in Korea, its ideas, concepts, and words were incorporated into all other teachings and into the life of the Korean people. Taoism was assimilated by Shamanism, and influenced Buddhism and neo-Confucianism. One of its teachings that influenced the minds of Koreans from the time of the Shilla dynasty was geomancy. People believed that the configuration of any given landscape had an influence upon the fortunes of the people living there and their posterity. According to geomancy, the fortunes of a given family were in part determined by the location of its ancestors' graves. So a close study of terrain was pursued. Cf. Woo-Keun Han, *The History of Korea* (Seoul: Eul Yoo Publishing Co., 1970), p. 285.

[7] Confucianism was introduced to Korea before the introduction of Buddhism. When the Three Kingdoms of Koguryo, Paekje, and Shilla adopted Chinese culture, Confucianism was introduced as part of Chinese culture. Though Confucianism had little influence on the government institutions during that period, the Confucian virtues were inculcated. During the unified Shilla Kingdom, the dominant influence of Chinese culture was reflected in the educational system. Those who wished to

existed throughout her history and all these religious teachings penetrated deeply into the structure of Korean culture and society.[8] They not only provided the way to perceive and understand humanity, nature, and the universe, but also affected the actual life of the Korean people in their historical situations. Korean people have developed a certain understanding of the nature of religion in their history and life situations. This folk understanding of the nature of religion has a significant bearing on doing theology in the multi-religious milieu of Korea and in presenting Christian teachings to the Korean people.

Religion as Gyo

The traditional Korean word for religion is *Gyo* (i.e., Teaching).[9] In Korea, Christianity is translated either as *Chen-Ju-Gyo* (Teaching of the Heavenly Lord) or as *Ki-Dok-Gyo* (Teaching of Christ). Shamanism is called *Mu-Gyo* (the Spirit's Teaching or Shaman's Teaching); Taoism is *Do-Gyo* (Taoist Teaching); Buddhism is *Bul-Gyo* (Buddha's Teaching). Confucianism is not regarded as a religion, but as a social and moral philosophy. However, Confucianism, like the other three, fits into the same category of teaching, thus it is called *Yu-Gyo* (Scholar's Teaching). Hector Diaz

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become government official had to acquire knowledge of the Confucian classics. [The Confucian classics are *Shih ching* (Book of Songs); *Shu ching* (Book of Documents); *I ching* (Book of Changes); *Ch'un Ch'iu* (Spring and Autumn Annals); *Li chi* (Record of Rituals); *Lun yu* (Analects); and *Hsiao ching* (Book of Filial Piety), etc.] So, from this time on until the end of the Yi dynasty, education in Korea comprised mostly the study of the Confucian classics.

What must be noted about Confucianism in Korea is that Confucianism was a morality, philosophy, and religion exclusively for scholars who constituted the aristocracy of the traditional Korean society. The teachings of Confucianism was taught and studied only within the *yangban* class who monopolised the social privileges and respect. The minjung class was socially discouraged from learning the teachings of Confucianism, which was regarded as an infiltration into the world of *yangban*. Thus the teachings of Confucianism were monopolised by the *yangban* class who had the privilege to be educated and were consequently offered the opportunities to become government officials, i.e., the rulers of the people.

[8] It is usually observed that in Korean culture we may identify three layers of different cultural elements. See Dong-Shik Ryu, *The History and Structure of the Korean Shamanism* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1983), pp. 14-15. Ryu noted that the surface layer is Western civilisation, accompanied with Christianity, introduced into the Korean soil since the end of the nineteenth century. *Ibid.* The middle layer is the Confucian culture which had dominated Korean society for almost five hundred years during the Yi dynasty. And the lowest layer is Chinese civilisation and Buddhism which had filtered into the Korean peninsula over the period of more than one thousand years. However, it should not be overlooked that there has been a core of Korean culture below these layers of cultures. The core is primitive religiosity and Shamanism.

[9] The modern Korean word for religion, *Chong-Gyo* came from Japanese. The Japanese coined this word to translate the Western concept of religion.

observes that *Gyo* can be understood either in the narrow sense as the individual study of the teachings of Taoism, Confucianism, or Buddhism, or in the broad and more common sense as the propagation of the study among the people.[10]

In the multi-religious milieu of Korea, every *Gyo* is perceived as having its unique teaching. In Korea, as well as in other parts of Asia, every *Gyo* emphasised its uniqueness. Though a *Gyo* may borrow the teachings of other *Gyo*, they never fused into one.[11] Diaz observes that although the different *Gyo*s borrowed from each other they interpreted and adapted in their own way what they borrowed in order to present themselves as a renewed teaching with a deeper vision and explanation of the world in all its aspects, thus realising the universal harmony and unity.[12] In the multi-religious context of Korea, the *Gyo*s such as Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism have maintained their uniqueness and co-existed. Each *Gyo* has claimed that it is a unique and the only true *Gyo*. Insofar as Christianity is perceived as a *Gyo*, it should be admitted that Christianity presents its own teaching.

Role of Gyo in the Korean Context

The *Gyo* is understood to provide a comprehensive system to perceive life and nature for the people. The *Gyo* is believed to offer a comprehensive system to perceive humanity, nature, and the universe. In Asia, particularly in Korea, *Gyo* provided the foundation for culture, civilisation, philosophy, sciences, and art. In this sense, it is not an exaggeration to say that the religious milieu in Korea can be equated with the cultural milieu of the Korean people. It is quite right to observe that "the mind of Korea originally did not distinguish religion and philosophy, religion and politics, sacred and secular."[13] In the life situations of the Korean people, the role of religion has been significant. It is not simply based on the fact that the religions have existed in the Korean soil for a long time. The absolute influence of religious traditions on the life of the Korean people is observed in the fact that the religious teachings have

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[10] Diaz, *op cit.*, p. 117.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 148.

[13] Sun-Hwan Pyun, "Other Religions and Theology," *EAJT* 3:2 (1985), p. 333.

penetrated into every realm of the Korean people's life and dictated not only the external code of conduct of the Korean people but also the whole range of their values and morals.[14]

Christianity in the Korean Soil

It was at the end of the 18th century that the Catholic faith was introduced to Korean people. The Catholic faith had not spread widely among Korean people until the end of the 19th century because of the hostile policy and severe persecutions by the government. The Protestant faith was introduced to Korean people at the end of the 19th century. Since then, the Korean Protestant churches have seen a remarkable growth until recent times. During the same period, the Catholic Church also witnessed a substantial growth. We may present two explanations for this growth of the Christian churches in Korea during the last one hundred years. First, the persecution of the followers of the Christian faith by the government disappeared when the Yi dynasty collapsed after being annexed to imperial Japan. Second, the Korean people sought their exit from the national predicament in the teachings of Christianity. The national predicament enabled the Korean people to open their heart to this new teaching.

Today Christianity is one of the major religions in Korea. However, it should be noted that the traditional religions like Buddhism and Confucianism have not been eradicated from the life of the Korean people. On the contrary, they are on the resurgence in Korea today. While Korea had been a Buddhist country and a Confucian country in the past, she has never been fully Christianised in her long history. So, if we are to describe Korean society in terms of religious influence, it will be more appropriate to say that Korea is in a post-Confucian era or in a post-Buddhist era, rather than a post-Christian era. Thus the theological issues arising in the post-Christian Western context must not be imported directly to the Korean and generally to the Asian contexts. The awareness of this phenomenon is important in our attempt to build an Asian theology. At any rate, in the Korean context, theological reflections on the Gospels must be relevant to the life of the Korean people so that they can

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[14] For example, Diaz, *op cit.*, p. 143, observes that the "*Do-Duk Gyung*" (in Chinese it is transliterated as *Tao-Te Ching*), one of the books of Taoism, was accepted as a manual of government, a book of natural philosophy, a compendium of metaphysical and mystical wisdom, a book of morality, and a way to true humanity.

enable Korean people to perceive the teachings of the historical Jesus in their concrete situations.

II.2 Sufferings of the People

The second aspect of the Korean hermeneutical milieu is the suffering of the poor and oppressed people. Until recently, the Korean people have suffered under the economic exploitation and the political oppression of dictatorial regimes. In the 1970s and 1980s, some Christian theologians developed minjung theology in the context of the sufferings of the Korean people under military dictatorships. The starting point for the minjung theologians was their experience of the minjung reality in the historical situations of political oppression and economic exploitation. In those inhumane circumstances, minjung theologians attempted to side with the minjung and read the Bible from the perspective of the minjung so as to expose political injustice and to claim the historical subjecthood of the minjung. This contextual concern prompted minjung theologians to search for the existence of the poor and oppressed minjung and the minjung reality in the Bible. Based on their reading of the biblical data from the perspective of minjung, these theologians presented their own perception of Jesus as the minjung Jesus.

However, since the inauguration of the civilian government at the beginning of the 1990s, which ended the dictatorial regimes which had oppressed the Korean people for about three decades, the theological voice of minjung theology has dwindled in Korea and even its contextual relevance has come to be doubted. People began to feel that with the democratisation of Korean society, it has become increasingly difficult to claim the relevance of minjung theology in the Korean context. Although the relevance of minjung theology may be challenged in accordance with the progress of democratisation of the political system, the reality of the suffering poor *min* which the minjung theologians discovered in the 1970s and 1980s still exists and poses a serious social problem in Korea even after political democratisation. At this juncture, we need to re-emphasise the importance of having concern for the poor *min* and to evaluate critically minjung theology in the hope of relating one of the most significant aspects of Jesus' teaching to the Korean people.

III. Method

In his report of the theological seminar-workshops between 1983 and 1985, Song proposed a new orientation for doing theology in Asia and spelled out what it means to do theology with Asian resources.[15] Although the report does not cover the whole range of challenges faced by Asian theologians who seek to construct an Asian theology[16] or contain the recent discourse,[17] we can obtain an important picture of the new theological trends which emerged in the Asian context about a decade ago. In this report, Song explains the motive for a new quest for an Asian mode of doing theology and the framework within which the task is to be done. He describes the nature of this task as articulating an authentically Asian theology while being faithful to the Gospel at the same time.[18] Here we need to elaborate the meaning of being faithful to the Christian Gospel.

In this thesis, we are opposed to those who argue that the authority of Christian Bible must be relativised and other religious traditions must be reflected in the process of reading the Bible.[19] In the multi-religious milieu in Korea we acknowledge the fact

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[15] C. S. Song, "Let us do Theology with Asian Resources," *EAJT* 3:2 (1985), pp. 202-212.

[16] The themes discussed at the three theological seminar-workshops are: i) exploration and reorientation (1983), ii) doing theology with Asian folk literature (1984), and iii) doing theology with peoples' movements (1985). Despite Song's reflection on the seminar-workshops that the religious realities of Asia should not be excluded from the theological discourse in Asia, the theme of inter-faith dialogue, which later emerged as a much discussed issue in the Asian theological discourse, is not included in those seminar-workshops.

[17] More recent trends emerging on the Asian scene are described in R.S. Sugirtharajah (ed.), *Frontiers in Asian Christian Theology. Emerging Trends* (New York: Orbis, 1994), pp. 1-8.

[18] C. S. Song, *op cit.*, p. 202.

[19] Archie C.C. Lee, "Biblical Interpretation in Asian Perspectives," *AJT* 7:1 (1993), pp. 35-39, suggests cross-textual hermeneutics as the most appropriate approach to the Bible in Asia. First, he rejects the text-alone approach that "sees and reads the Bible as the Text which is venerated as the timeless, universal, self-sufficient and unchanging record of God." He asserts that the assumption of the universal validity of ways of reading the Bible is wrong. He also argues that the biblical interpretation as developed in the West has almost exclusively reflected Western perspectives and theological concerns. He does not explain this point in a more concrete way, but simply points out that the theological view of the Bible transferred by the Western missionaries cannot be accepted. Secondly, he criticises the text-context interpretive mode that understands biblical interpretation in terms of two-fold task of explaining what a text meant in biblical time and what it means today. He dismisses this approach as inadequate in the multi-religious context of Asia. He criticises Minjung theology in Korea, the homeland theology of Taiwan, and theology of struggle in Phillipines for their heavy reliance on the text, for employing sociological hermeneutics and the materialistic interpretation of the Bible. He argues, by quoting D. Preman Niles, for the necessity to relate context to text, not *vice versa*. Thirdly, Lee presents cross-textual hermeneutics as an appropriate Asian approach to biblical hermeneutics, which will solve what he calls the dilemma of Asian biblical interpretation. He explains that the dilemma is created by the fact that i) the exclusive claim of

that there are different scriptures which are accepted as authoritative by their respective adherents.[20] This acknowledgement does not imply the negation of the unique place of the Christian Bible in the Christian faith community, for the Bible is primarily the book of the Christian Family, i.e., the Christian faith community.[21] Although it is a correct observation that "the presence of scriptures of other faiths creates a situation for Christians in Asia fundamentally different from that which Christians in the West had to face over the years", it does not necessarily mean that we

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authority of the Bible cannot be accepted because God was already present in the history, religion, and culture of Asia, and that ii) we have to consider the existence of the Asia 'text' along with the biblical text. He argues that there are two sides to such a hermeneutical task: "On the one hand, it affirms the cultural-historical conditioned nature of the biblical text. A text is studied from a critical-historical point of view in order to understand its form and setting-in-life. The text is then applied to and interpreted in a contemporary context. It is assumed that the text can enlighten our context. On the other hand, our Asian perspectives must also be brought in to shed light in the interpretation of biblical text."

However, we find that Lee oscillates between conflicting positions. i) The hermeneutical task he proposes here is not different from the interpretive way that he strongly rejects. It is hard to find any difference between the interpretive mode he suggests and that of minjung theology, for the minjung perspective was gained in the context of political struggle against oppression and dictatorship, and has operated as a hermeneutical key in the way of reading the biblical text. ii) Lee seems to contradict himself by saying that "the Bible should provide the criteria to judge the Asia 'text'. In such a hermeneutics the critical spirit of the prophets and the open-endedness of the radical wisdom in the Bible will provide a model for being critical to our cultural-religious tradition and our socio-political struggles in Asia." *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39. iii) Lee actually claims the unique authority of the Bible in Asian context by stating: "we do not affirm all resources found in our culture and all institutional structures of our society nor do we reject them off-handed. They have to be examined and judged by the God of history and Lord of creation who confronts us in our context through the word of the Bible." *Ibid.*, p. 39. iv) At the same time, he argues that "it is imperative that the Biblical text (text A) has to be interpreted in our own context in constant interpretation and interaction with our cultural religious texts (text B)." *Ibid.*

[20] S.J. Samartha, *One Christ - Many Religions. Towards a Revised Christology* (New York: Orbis, 1991), p. 58. The Hindus have their triple canon (the Upanishads, the Brahmasutra, and the Bhagavadgita). The Buddhists have the tripitaka, and the Confucianists and the Taoists have their own sacred books. Here we may refer to Kwok Pui Lan who holds that in Asia the concept of "scripture" did not exist. She argues that the notion of "scripture" was culturally conditioned and cannot be found in Hinduism or Confucianism. Kwok Pui Lan, "Discovering the Bible in the Non-biblical World," in R. S. Sugirtharajah ed. *Voices from the Margin. Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (London: S.P.C.K., 1991), p. 34. Moreover, she holds that the Bible is not sacred, but only one form of human construction to talk about God. However, by arguing that the various stories which contain both the liberation of women and other cultural situations must be regarded as *sacred* as the biblical stories, she actually acknowledges the sacredness of the Bible.

[21] Even S. J. Samartha, who argues that we need to bring the insights of other religious traditions into our reading of the Bible, says: "In order to avoid any misunderstanding, it must be stated firmly and in as unambiguous terms as possible that the cumulative effect of these points does not in any way minimize or weaken the authority of the Bible for Christian life and thought. . . The Bible remains normative for all Christians in all places and at all times, because it bears witness to God's dealings with the whole world and to Jesus Christ, his life and death, and resurrection, his deeds and teachings, thus providing the basis for Christian theological reflection." Samartha, *One Christ-Many Religions*, p. 75.

have to be "open to different religious and cultural insights in the matter of interpreting the texts."[22] Each *Gyo* has its teachings written down in its holy scriptures, and those in the *Gyo* believed that their holy scriptures contain truth - the Law or the *Do* ('the Way') that must be studied and practised. In the multi-religious milieu in Korea, the faithful study of Christian teachings as recorded in the Bible should be the primary task of Christian theologians in the Christian faith community and that task must be recognaised as the authentic way of doing theology in Korea.[23] Thus, in our attempt to grasp the *Jongshin* of the historical Jesus, we take the Bible as the only authoritative source.

We will respond to the description of the historical Jesus in minjung theology. We will not attempt to evaluate the historical contribution of minjung theology in the 1970s and 1980s, for it goes beyond the scope of our study. Our goal is to present a theological critique of the minjung description of the historical Jesus on the basis of the exegesis of the biblical passages that minjung theologians have used to develop their theology. Most of the minjung theologians whom we will discuss in this thesis are the

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[22] *Contra* S. J. Samartha, "The Asian Context: Sources and Trends," in *Voices from the Margin*, p. 46.

[23] Samartha, *One Christ-Many Religions*, p. 74, criticises Asian Christians who hold the superiority of the Bible over other scriptures. He observes that "the notion that the bible is the 'true' scripture and all other scriptures are 'false' is so stamped in the minds of many Christians that any discussion on scriptural authority becomes almost impossible." We need to examine this remark very carefully because it touches on the important aspect of people's religiosity. Here we need to point out that it reflects the religious ethos of a faith community in the multireligious and multiscriptural milieu in Asia. First, if they do not become convinced of the superiority of the Christian teachings, it would have been impossible for Asian people to accept Christianity and commit their lives to the teachings of the Bible in spite of the existence of different religious traditions that are alive and practised by the majority of the Asian peoples. Secondly, though it does not seem to be clear whether many Asian Christians disregard other scriptures as 'false', it will be meaningless to become a Christian without holding the notion that the Bible contains 'true' teachings. Thirdly, as in any other faith communities in Asian religions, the discussion on scriptural authority should never be raised within the Christian faith community itself in Asia. As the authority of sacred books of other religious communities in Asia is absolute within each faith community, so it is quite natural that the biblical authority is accepted without question within the Christian faith community. Even Samartha has to contradict himself by acknowledging the fact that the sacred books take the exclusive place within respective faith community and each faith community makes truth claims on the basis of the scriptural authority. Samartha admits the unique teachings of the respective scriptures: "Gita teaches various *avatara*, Qu'ran teaches that Mohamed is 'the seal' of the prophets, Torah still claims the coming of the Messiah, and the New Testament teaches that Jesus is 'the way, the truth, and the life.' These claims are important for the self-understanding and identity of each community of faith in the larger community. These should not be relativized, but accepted as legitimate within the boundaries of particular communities of faith."

so-called first-generation minjung theologians such as Nam-Dong Suh, Byung-Mu Ahn, Yong-Bock Kim, Young-Hak Hyun, etc., for these theologians were those who not only pioneered the theological reflections on the side of the minjung but also experienced the oppressive and exploitative reality in person.

IV. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six Chapters. In Chapter One, I will propose the concept of *mokmin* as a hermeneutical starting point to perceive both the historical reality in Korea and the *Jongshin* of the historical Jesus. We will also examine the hermeneutical starting point in minjung theology and expose its failure to present a relevant framework of perceiving the historical reality in Korea. Though minjung theology started with the discovery of the suffering minjung in Korea, it could not represent the intellectual and religious ethos of the Korean people because of its hermeneutical captivity to the Marxist approach for social change. The first task in this chapter is to survey the definition of minjung and the description of minjung as the subjects in history.[24] The perception that minjung subjecthood is evidenced in the minjung revolts in history and in stories will be refuted. I will then introduce the concept of *mokmin* which authentically represents the solution of the unjust political and economic reality in the thought world of the Korean people. We will survey the historical background in which Yak-Yong Chong, a Korean thinker in the early 19th century, demanded the *mokmin* praxis from the government and local officials. In this connection, it is significant to identify the people whose suffering reality Chong discovered and experienced. Instead of using the term 'minjung', I will use the phrase 'the poor *min*' to designate the people who have had to suffer the economic exploitation *both* in Chong's time *and* in present-day Korea. We do not include those who are politically oppressed in the category of 'the poor *min*' as well as in the category of 'minjung', unless they are also those who have to suffer material poverty. The *mokmin* praxis that Chong demanded is characterised by two things: building a statusless *min*-oriented

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[24] When minjung theologians use the expression "subjecthood or subjectivity of the minjung", what they mean is that the minjung are the subjects of history. Cf. *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, edited by the Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis; London: Zed Press, 1981).

society and establishing economic justice in the society.

Chapter Two attempts to identify the *min* in the Bible. One of the theological contributions of minjung theology is the use of *ochlos* as a theologically significant term. Minjung theologians assert that the *ochlos* was the minjung at the time of Jesus. However, the equation of the *ochlos* with minjung creates more problems than it solves. The use of the term *ochlos* as an equivalent term with minjung is refuted through exegesis of the relevant biblical pericopae, particularly in Mark. The conclusion of this study is that *ochlos* carries no theological significance but is used simply in reference to a group of people gathered at a certain place at a particular time regardless of the social status of the people gathered.

The next step in our discussion is to identify the poor *min* in the Bible. As minjung theologians categorise the poor, the sick, women, the tax-collectors and sinners as the minjung in the *Sitz im Leben Jesu*, we will examine whether the four categories of people fit into our understanding of the poor *min*. We will attempt to expose that the discovery of minjung in the Bible is only partially supported by the biblical data. Though the poor *min* are identified with the poor and most of the sick in the Bible, it is doubtful whether we can categorise women and the tax-collectors and sinners in general as the poor *min*. The Gospel writers do not report that all women at the time of Jesus were the poor *min*, but they report rich women as well as poor women. We may accept the observation that women were socially marginalised in the patriarchal society of Israel. The tax collectors were also socially despised not because of their poverty but because of their exploitation of the Jewish people as agents of the Roman colonial power. Jesus' association with the socially despised tax collectors and sinners has little bearing on his ministry for the poor *min*. The significance of this aspect of Jesus' ministry can be illuminated from a different perspective, not from the minjung perspective.

Chapter Three deals with the issue of Jesus' identity. In minjung theology the status of the historical Jesus is perceived as a mere minjung. Accordingly, Jesus' leadership role is denied in minjung theology. In his relation to the minjung, Jesus is perceived as a collective symbol of the minjung. However, we maintain that Jesus' being and the character of his ministry must not be confused, and emphasise the fact that Jesus was a royal figure. Behind the theological endeavour of minjung theologians to describe the historical Jesus as a mere minjung, we detect a hidden assumption that Jesus is not a

minjung. If Jesus was a mere minjung, as minjung theologians argue, the theological reflections of the minjung theologians become pointless, for there should be nothing particular in the fact that a mere minjung lived as a minjung. What we emphasise is that Jesus' association with the poor *min* was scandalous and radical in the Jewish society just because Jesus was not a minjung, but a royal figure.

Chapter Four presents the first aspect of Jesus' *mokmin* praxis: solidarity with the poor *min*. As the Jesus movement is characterised as the Kingdom of God movement in minjung theology, we first discuss the concept of the Kingdom of God. While the Kingdom of God is interpreted in minjung theology as referring to both the expectation of the direct reign of God in contrast to any form of human rule and the liberation of the minjung from their material poverty, we criticise that this interpretation is only partially correct. The Kingdom of God that was expected by the Jewish people was a just society in which the poor *min* are taken care of but it was a kingdom to be established by God's human agent called the Messiah. The historical character of Jesus' healing ministry and his table fellowship as understood in minjung theology is also refuted. Jesus' healing ministry does not highlight 'the potentiality of the collective minjung' but the compassionate mind of the individual Jesus, who, though not a minjung, sided with the minjung. Though Jesus' table fellowship is perceived in minjung theology as the crystalisation of Jesus' minjung movement, we present a different interpretation. It is certainly true that Jesus' table fellowship with tax collectors and sinners was scandalous in Jewish society. However, we emphasise that what makes Jesus' table fellowship scandalous was that Jesus associated with those groups of people who were despised in Jewish society not only by the religious leaders but even by the poor *min*. Drawing on these discussions, we attempt to present our interpretation of Jesus' healing ministry which demonstrates his solidarity with the poor *min*.

Chapter Five illuminates the role of Jesus' twelve disciples in the Jesus community. As minjung theologians sharply contrast the minjung with the ruling class, they do not acknowledge any leadership role over the minjung. They do not perceive Jesus as a leader of the minjung. Accordingly, in minjung theology, the role of Jesus' disciples is not highlighted at all. However, as in any faith community in Asian religions, we discover that the twelve disciples were trained by Jesus their Master to be the representatives of the faith community and the transmitter of Jesus' teachings. What

we find in Jesus' exclusive instructions to his disciples is the demand to follow Jesus' *mokmin* praxis. The disciples are inculcated by Jesus to embody the *mokmin* spirit by building a statusless society and by helping the poor *min*.

Chapter Six describes Jesus as the pedagogue of the oppressors of Jewish society. A fundamental aspect of my argument is that Jesus' mission as the pedagogue of the oppressors was even more radical than his gesture to side with the poor min, for the cost of Jesus' pedagogy of the oppressors was his life. Though Jesus' mission is perceived as a confrontation with the existing political and religious system, it is not properly emphasised that Jesus did not confront the system for confrontation's sake. In Jesus' intentional confrontation with the Jewish religious leaders, we identify his intention to be the pedagogue of the oppressors. By exegeting some biblical pericopae, we attempt to present the image of Jesus as the pedagogue of the oppressors and argue that Jesus consistently challenged and demanded the Jewish religious leaders and the rich members of the society to accept his teaching and side with him for *mokmin* praxis.

What we attempt in this thesis is not only to expose the failure of minjung theology to present a holistic image of the historical Jesus to the Korean people but to present an authentic and contextual perception of Jesus' *Jongshin* based on the Gospels. Through this study I hope to demonstrate that the perception of the historical Jesus as the *mokmin* Jesus provides *both* a biblically faithful *and* a contextually relevant understanding of the historical Jesus.

Chapter One. Perspective for a Korean Christian Theology

Introduction

We cannot approach the historical Jesus without any preunderstanding about Jesus or free from our contextual concern.[1] Although we may attempt to approach the historical Jesus by putting aside all our preconceived ideas about him, it would not be possible to approach him without any historical presupposition, for the interpreter is not free from his own historical situation. The presupposition or the historical concern that we bring to the biblical text is formed by the historical situation that we find ourselves in. Thus our present historical situation becomes the starting point in describing the historical Jesus.[2] This fact is confirmed by the various images of Jesus presented by theologians.[3]

In Korea, as Christianity is translated into *Ki-Dok-Gyo*, i.e., Christ's Teaching, it is the primary task of the Christian scholar to present the teachings of Christ to the faith community as well as to the general public. Christian theology in Korea has to articulate the teachings of Jesus to make them relevant to the life context of the Korean people. To do so, this Christian theology must be faithful both to the teachings of Jesus and to the contextual needs of the Korean people. Though we may say that political oppression has been substantially reduced, it should not be overlooked that the suffering of the poor and economically oppressed people still persists.

Given these religious and social situations, we argue that the perception of Jesus as a minjung Jesus failed both in presenting the true picture of the historical Jesus and in addressing the contextual needs of the Korean people. Instead, we propose the concept of *mokmin* as the hermeneutical starting point to describe the historical Jesus. In other words, we perceive the image of Jesus not as a minjung Jesus but as a *mokmin* Jesus.

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[1] Cf. Luna L. Dingayan, "Towards a Christology of Struggle: A Proposal for Understanding the Christ," in *Theology and Politics*, ed. by Yeow Choo Lak, vol. I, ATESEA 1993, p. 132.

[2] Albert Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity. The Gospel of Liberation* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976), p.4. He asserts that "if we cannot achieve an unobstructed view of Jesus from the vantage point of our present circumstances, then we cannot achieve an unobstructed view of him at all."

[3] Cf. R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed. *Asian Faces of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1993).

As the term *mokmin* means "to serve the *min* (or the minjung),"[4] we need to identify the poor and oppressed *min* first in the historical situation in Korea. This means that we cannot bypass minjung theology which adopted the concern for the minjung as its theological starting-point.

I. Hermeneutical Starting Point in Minjung Theology

We need to discuss minjung theology in connection with our presentation of a new hermeneutical tool, for minjung theologians have produced theological reflections addressing the same contextual needs on the basis of their description of Jesus' teachings and practice.

As the phrase "minjung theology" clearly indicates, the theological focus in minjung theology is not on Jesus but on the minjung. Nam-Dong Suh, one of the pioneers of minjung theology, went so far as to argue that the subject matter of minjung theology is not Jesus but the minjung. According to Suh, the starting point of minjung theology is the premise that Jesus is the means for understanding the minjung correctly, rather than the concept of minjung being the instrument for understanding Jesus.[5] Byung-Mu Ahn, another pioneer of minjung theology, argues that we should pay attention to the people surrounding Jesus and discover the minjung in relation to the historical Jesus.[6] Ahn corrects Suh by saying that minjung theology should illuminate the events that the minjung and Jesus are making together, rather than dichotomise the minjung and Jesus by the subject-object formula.[7]

Although Suh and Ahn have developed minjung theology with slightly different theological premises, it is certain that they put much emphasis on the discovery of the minjung as the starting point of minjung theology.

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[4] The term "minjung" is a combination of two Chinese characters: "*min*" and "*jung*". The word *min* means "the people" and the word *jung* means "the mass", so minjung means either "the people" or "the mass people."

[5] Nam-Dong Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," in *Minjung Theology. People as the Subjects of History*, ed., by the Commission of Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (London: Zed Press, 1981), p. 160.

[6] Byung-Mu Ahn, "The Subjects of History in Mark," (in Korean) in *Minjung and Korean Theology* (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 1982), p. 180.

[7] *Ibid.*

I.1. The Rise of Minjung Theology

Minjung theology appeared in the middle of the 1970s in Korea as the result of theological reflections by some theologians on what they had experienced in the oppressive and exploitative situations in Korea. The 1970s in Korea were characterised by the political oppression of the dictatorial regime of Chung-Hee Park and its economic exploitation of the urban workers and the rural peasants. President Park, who took power through a military *coup d'etat* in 1960, pursued an economic development policy depending on foreign capital and made it the national goal to achieve a rapid growth in economy and industrialisation. The side-effects of the export-oriented economic development began to be felt early in 1970s, because the government adopted a policy of supporting selected companies to build up the economy by distributing the foreign capital among them. As Korea lacked natural resources, capital and advanced technology, the government had to mobilise the only resource that they had, i.e., the relatively well-educated work force. Because the primary goal of the government was economic growth, the welfare of the workers was completely ignored. As the government maintained the policy of keeping the price of rice low, many of the tenant-farmers, who found it hard to survive by growing rice, deserted the country and moved to the urban area. As a result, the population of the low-paid workers in the urban industrial area increased dramatically and urban slum areas began to appear. The inhumane working environment created a lot of labour disputes and the vicious circle in which the rich became richer and the poor became poorer deepened.

In the political realm, the dictatorial regime absolutised its power under the pretext of continual economic growth and national security, and cracked down on the labour movement. Park's regime rewrote the constitution in the early 1970s to perpetuate the dictatorial rule and systematically oppressed the people who opposed the dictatorial regime through a series of emergency measures. The resentment of the workers who were exploited and alienated in the distribution of the wealth gained by industrialisation has increased, and the resistance of students, intellectuals, journalists, and religious leaders against the dictatorial government was heightened. The dictatorial regime responded by cracking down on the press and strengthened its control of the press, suppressing the basic human rights of the people. Even college professors joined in the

anti-government struggles and criticised the government for suppressing the freedom of the press. Many of the college professors were forced to leave their schools and were arrested, persecuted, and tortured by the government agents. In this worsening political and economic situation, some pastors and theologians attempted to awaken the social responsibility of the Church by challenging the dictatorial regime and initiating urban mission projects to protect the basic human rights of the people who were economically exploited and politically oppressed. In the process of their involvement in the struggle against the dictatorial regime, some theologians began to read the Bible from the perspective of the minjung and to articulate their theological reflections on the situation. Henceforth the theological task to find the minjung and minjung reality in the Bible began.

I.2. Discovery of Minjung as Historical Reality

Before minjung theologians began to articulate their theological concepts based on the discovery of the minjung reality, there had existed in Korea various expressions of the minjung movement such as minjung art, minjung literature, and minjung historiography as well as the anti-government demonstrations that resisted the dictatorial regime. There has been a lot of discussion on how to define the concept of minjung among the social scientists in Korea, though no consensus was achieved among them. Unlike the social scientists who have tried to define minjung on the political, economic, social and cultural levels, minjung theologians prefer not to define minjung as a concept. However, because they have to describe the minjung, they cannot avoid using certain categories to describe them. We identify two different categories in describing the minjung, i.e., the socio-economic and the political categories.

Socio-Economic Description of the Minjung

The social scientists in Korea have defined minjung as those who are politically oppressed, economically exploited, socially marginalized, and culturally alienated.[8] Young-Hak Hyun observes that this way of defining minjung cannot convey the true picture of minjung.[9] Hyun rejects this social-scientific definition of minjung in that, if

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[8] Wan-Sang Han, *Minjung Sociology* (Seoul: Jongro Books Press, 1969), pp. 63-77.

we follow this definition, the college professor who was dismissed from his/her college for political reasons must be counted as a minjung. According to Hyun, this professor may be a minjung according to the political definition of the term, but economically he/she belongs to the middle class, socially to high class, and culturally to the highest class.[10] In identifying minjung in the Korean context, Hyun expresses well how minjung theologians perceive the identity of the minjung. He states:

> When minjung theologians use the term minjung, they think of those currently living people like the poor farmers in the country, those who fled from the harsh country life to become either factory workers in the cities or the coal-miners, those who live in illegal shacks that can be demolished any time, a trash picker, a hoodlum, a day labourer, a street cleaner, a prostitute, the mistress of a brothel, the employees of small factories who suffer from lack of nutrition and sleep, and the prisoners, etc.[11]

Given this understanding and description of minjung, we can say that the minjung refer to those who are alienated from the privileges of the society and consequently have to lead a poor and inhumane life. Although we may say that the life of the minjung cannot be sharply classified into political, cultural, social, and economic realms, the minjung, as described above in the contemporary Korean context, are understood primarily on the economic level, thus designating those who are considered to be poor within Korean society. In other words, the minjung are those who have to struggle with the problem of bread. The various modes of existence of the minjung may be explained in terms of their different struggles to meet their economic needs. The common situation that makes the people suffer as the minjung is that of poverty. The various jobs that they hold indicate that they belong to the low classes in Korean society. Hence minjung theologians perceive the minjung primarily on the experiential level as those who suffer from the lack of economic power. As minjung theologians correctly observe, those people who have to suffer because of their poverty and have to struggle very hard to meet their economic needs are found in any society, in any period of human history. Thus, according to minjung theologians, the minjung or, more correctly, those people who can be designated as minjung, have existed in every society from the beginning of

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[9] Young-Hak Hyun, "Minjung, Suffering Servant, Hope," (in Korean) in *Developments of Korean Minjung Theology in the 1980s* (Seoul: Korea Theological Research Institute, 1990), p. 12.

[10] *Idem.*

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

human history. The modes of existence that the minjung have to choose in order to meet their economic needs will be different depending on the society, so minjung theologians prefer to leave it as an open and flexible concept.

Political Description of the Minjung

Although there seems to be no objection among minjung theologians to the understanding of the minjung on the socio-economic level, it is significant to note that they also present different perceptions of the minjung. They describe the minjung in the political dimension.[12] However, in the political understanding of the minjung, minjung theologians have voiced different perspectives.

Yong-Bock Kim presents a more theoretical description of the minjung in its political dimension, but the scope of the minjung as Kim understands the term seems to be more restricted. Although stating that minjung is not a concept or object which can be easily explained or defined, for it signifies a living reality which is dynamic, changing, and complex,[13] Kim actually defines the minjung by saying that minjung are determined by their relation to the political power.[14] Kim holds that the minjung are defined politically and should be differentiated from the Marxist proletariat, which is defined socio-economically, though he admits that the socio-economic dimension in understanding minjung is not excluded altogether. Kim seems to hint at the identification of minjung with the common people, whom he contrasts with the rulers

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[12] Chi-Ha Kim, a Korean poet who is considered to have provided insights for minjung theology, also attempts to clarify the concept of minjung on the political level in his statement made at his trial at Seoul District Court: "The minjung are those who have increased and occupied the ends of the earth, revolutionised the world, built societies, and advanced the course of human history. . . The concept of the minjung should be contrasted with the concept of the regime or the ruling authority and differentiated from the intellectuals who take a middle position between the minjung and the rulers." Quoted from N. Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," in *Minjung Theology*, p. 155. According to this statement, Kim does not seem to equate the minjung with the poor and the oppressed people. The minjung are those who are ruled and those who have actively participated in and contributed significantly to the progress of human history. In this sense, it is hard to say that minjung here designate exclusively those alienated and marginalized in society, though they may be included among the minjung. While he states that the concept of minjung should be contrasted with the concept of the ruling authority, Kim seems to contradict himself by stating, at several lines below, in the same statement, that the course of human history shows the change from the rule of power to the rule of the minjung. The expression 'the rule of the minjung' must be an oxymoron in that those who are in the ruling position cannot be called minjung and *vice versa*.

[13] Yong-Bock Kim, "Messiah and Minjung: Discerning Messianic Politics over against Political Messianism," in *Minjung Theology. People as the Subjects of History*, p. 184.

by saying that "the minjung understand themselves in relation to the power which is in command."[15] He also observes that historically the minjung have always been in the condition of being ruled, a situation which they seek to overcome.[16] According to these statements, the minjung may be equated to all those who do not belong to the ruling class. However, Kim expresses clearly what he means by the remark that the minjung is a dynamic and changing concept by articulating the minjung politically:

> Woman belongs to minjung when she is politically dominated by men. An ethnic group is a minjung group when it is politically dominated by another group. A race is minjung when it is dominated by another powerful ruling race. When intellectuals are suppressed by the military power elite, they belong to minjung. Of course, the same applies to the workers and farmers.[17]

According to this understanding of minjung, anyone or any group of people who are politically dominated by those who have political power can be classified as minjung. According to Kim's understanding of minjung, even the workers and farmers will become minjung only when they are politically dominated by another group. The sole criterion to determine whether a certain group of people is minjung or not is the existence of political domination.

If we describe minjung in this way, we cannot overcome the fallacy inherent in this political description of the minjung. Kim argues that minjung are the permanent reality of history.[18] If so, not only the minjung but also the political domination that keeps the people in their minjung status should be the permanent reality of history. This being the case, the minjung will be locked up in their destiny to live as minjung without hope for liberation from oppression. However, it seems hard for us to accept the assumption that the political domination is also a permanent reality of history. Today, in Korea the military dictatorship has ended and the civilian government took many measures for democratisation. So those who were once described as minjung because of the political

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[14] *Ibid.*

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 183.

oppression now became members of the ruling party, thus forming part of the ruling class.

Nam-Dong Suh shows basically the same line of understanding as Yong-Bock Kim and argues that the minjung designate primarily those who are ruled, in contrast to the rulers.[19] According to Suh, the minjung seem to designate the whole population who do not belong to the ruling class. At one point Suh makes a statement that seems to support this interpretation of the minjung. In his article, "Concerning Theology of Minjung," written in 1975, Suh states:

> When I use the term minjung, I think of the two old-time phrases. One is the phrase in the March-first Declaration of Independence that the Korean people proclaimed in 1919 against the Japanese colonial rule which reads, "We declare this depending on the five thousand year history of our country and the sincerity and faithfulness of the twenty million Korean minjung. . ." The other phrase is, "government by the people, for the people, of the people" that Lincoln used in his Gettyzburg Address.[20]

The expression "twenty million Korean minjung" refers to the whole population of Korea at that time. Regardless of their social status, the whole Korean people who were suffering under the Japanese colonial rule, except the small number of people who sided with the colonial government, are described as the Korean minjung. This is a broad understanding of the minjung based on the fact that they are suffering people politically and economically. The minjung status of the Korean people was related to the political situation insofar as they had to suffer under Japanese colonial rule. The second phrase also discloses a rather different understanding of minjung. The "people" in Lincoln's address can be equated to the whole people in contrast to those who have the political power to rule. But the political context in which Lincoln made the

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[19] He also holds that the term minjung is a concept of political theology designating the ruled in contrast to the rulers. See his, "The Biblical Reference for Minjung Theology," in *Studies on Minjung Theology* (Seoul: Han Gil Sa, 1983), p. 229. Although sometimes he seems to identify the minjung only with the poor, Suh makes it very clear that the minjung must be understood politically. Cf. Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," in *Minjung Theology. People as the Subjects of History*, p. 160, where he argues that minjung is rather close to the meaning of "the poor" in the Covenant Code (Exod 20.22-23, 39), in the Prophets, and in the Epistle of James. However, he seems to correct his own argument in another place, asserting a political understanding of minjung: "When we try to describe the minjung in Asia, the poor consist only part of the minjung. In Asia the economic poverty is a significant factor to make people the minjung, but that is not all. We need to consider the various forms of political and social oppressions." Suh, "The Biblical Reference for Minjung Theology," (in Korean) in *Studies on Minjung Theology,* p. 227.

statement was quite different from the colonial situation in which the Korean people declared their independence. He further develops this understanding of minjung in the context where he argues the subjectivity of the minjung: "In the Third World where most of the people had to suffer under the domination of the Western powers, there were those groups of people who struggled both to achieve their subjectivity against the oppressive rulers in their own society and to gain sovereignty of their country against the foreign domination. We call them minjung."[21] Suh seems to be referring to a dictatorial regime when he says "the oppressive rulers in their own society", and to the colonial government when he uses the expression "foreign domination". He does not clarify whether he sees any connection between the oppressive dictatorial government and the foreign colonial power. It is therefore difficult to identify the groups of people who resist *both* the oppressive rulers in their own society *and* the foreign power at the same time. If we may correct Suh by distinguishing the two political situations in Korea, those who resisted the oppressive rulers in the domestic political realm will be those who participated in the anti-government or democratisation movement during the military dictatorship in Korea in the 1970s and 1980s. The minjung who resisted the foreign domination may be referring to the Korean people under Japanese colonial rule. Suh states his political description of minjung in relation to his explanation of the emergence of the minjung as a social force:

> We may say that during the 1970s a social power group that we call the minjung was formulated. In the midst of the struggles against the dictator government, the minjung has emerged as a social force. Now we have ten-year history of resistance against the injustice and oppression, during which period the Protestant ministers joined hands with the Catholic priests, Christians with the non-Christians, and the intellectuals with the workers. These people formed the subjective social force that we designate as the minjung. They opened a new chapter in the history of our country.[22]

The identity of minjung then becomes very complicated and seems to defy his previous arguments. According to Suh's statement, anyone who joins in the resistance against injustice and oppression becomes a minjung. Although Suh includes here the

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[20] N. Suh, "Concerning Theology of Minjung," (in Korean) in *Studies on Minjung Theology*, p. 32.

[21] N. Suh, "Who are the Minjung," in *Essays on Minjung* (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 1984), pp. 541, 549.

[22] N. Suh, *ibid.*, p. 553.

intellectuals who resisted injustice and oppression among the minjung, in another place he himself explicitly denies the possibility that the intellectuals can be included among the minjung:

> I do not think that the intellectuals, though oppressed politically, can be identified with the minjung who will become the subjects of history. . . How can we say that a college professor like me is a minjung? Though the intellectuals side with the minjung and struggle for the restoration of the basic human rights of the minjung, they cannot become the minjung.[23]

Hence we observe the difficulty that the minjung theologians experience in presenting the identity of minjung. According to the political definition of minjung, the people who were oppressed politically under the dictatorial regime in Korea may be designated as minjung. But it causes difficulty for the minjung theologians by including those who are materially rich but politically persecuted among the minjung. This difficulty in describing the identity of minjung is best reflected in the following statement by Suh:

> The term minjung in Korean and also in Japanese has its place and technical meaning in the area of political theology. . . The minjung is rather close to the meaning of the poor in the Covenant Code (Exod 20.22-23, 39), in the Prophets, and in the Epistle of James. The (common) people, crowd, and *volk* must be differentiated from the minjung, which is none of these. . . Jesus was a friend of tax collectors and sinners, that is, the minjung.[24]

First, Suh makes it clear that, both in Korea and in Japan, the term minjung is understood on the political, not the socio-economic dimension. But he contradicts his own remark by observing that the meaning of minjung is close to 'the poor' in the biblical materials, thus presenting a socio-economic understanding of the minjung. He then makes a remark that seems to reject a political definition of the minjung as those who are ruled, i.e., the common people, crowd, and *volk*, in contrast to the rulers. Also, it does not seem right to assert that the people, crowd, and the *volk* have to be differentiated from the minjung, for not only can we not rule out the possibility of finding the poor among these groups of people, but these are the very people who are ruled, thus constituting the minjung, who are here described politically. The most

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[23] N. Suh, "Speaking on Minjung Theology," in *Studies on Minjung Theology*, p. 178.

serious defect with this understanding of minjung is found in the last statement that regards the tax collectors as the minjung. As we will examine this aspect in detail later, it suffices here to point out that, in colonised Jewish Palestine, the tax collectors were part of the oppressor's system, so they were not politically oppressed nor were materially poor.

Summary

Whether minjung theologians describe minjung on the socio-economic level or on the political level, they perceive the minjung as an historical reality that they experience and witness in a particular historical and political situation rather than attempt to conceptualise it.[25] Minjung understood on the socio-economic level refers to those who can be considered poor within the society. The creation of the gap between the rich and the poor is mainly ascribed to the unjust economic development policy of the government. Minjung understood on the political level refers to those who are oppressed and persecuted by the dictatorial regime, regardless of their economic situation. As we have observed above, there seems to be no consensus among minjung theologians concerning the understanding of minjung. At the same time, we detect inconsistent and sometimes conflicting descriptions of minjung, which arise from the fact that the socio-economic description of the minjung is hard to harmonise with the political description of the minjung. The two different categories used to identify the

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[24] N. Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," p. 160.

[25] Jin-Ho Kim, "The Minjung as Subjects of History," *Shinhak Sasang* (The Theological Thought) 80 (Spring, 1993), p. 22, criticises those first generation minjung theologians for theologising their experience of exploitive reality based on fragmentary data, not grasping the unjust situation in relation to the structural problem. According to Kim, the first generation minjung theologians rejected the sociological description of the identity of the minjung, but described the minjung with such rhetorical expressions as "minjung event," or "Jesus event happening here and now according to God's providence". He explains that this extremely experiential attitude of the first generation minjung theologians in presenting their understanding of the minjung's identity was due to their reaction against the a-historical streams in the field of social science. However, Kim's criticism of the experiential description of the minjung by the first generation minjung theologians does not seem to be right, for it fails to consider the economic and political situation in which minjung theology emerged. The theologising of the first generation minjung theologians did not start from their academic concern to resist the dominant trend in the field of social science that was characterised by a-historical approach. The theological reflection of the minjung theologians was prompted not by their reaction to the a-historical academic methodology but by the demands of the oppressive and exploitive reality. In this sense, Kyung-Sok Suh's evaluation of the minjung theology is much closer to the true picture. K. Suh perceives that the task of minjung theology was to provide the biblical basis for the minjung movement in the situation where the minjung had to fight against the dictatorial regime in

minjung in Korea reflect the economic and political situation in Korea during the dictatorial regime that was characterised by its political oppression and economic exploitation.

The political description of minjung seems to fail to secure a permanent relevance. In other words, the description of the minjung as a permanent reality in contrast to the rulers proved to be wrong even in Korea. In the present political situation in Korea, those who were once politically persecuted and participated in the minjung movement against the dictatorial regime became part of the ruling party. Given the political situations in which the minjung became the ruling party, how can we say that the minjung is the permanent reality of history?

In contrast with the political description of the minjung, the socio-economic description of the minjung as the poor can be relevant today in Korea, regardless of the changes in the political situations. No minjung theologian would disagree with the socio-economic description of the minjung. It is again Young-Hak Hyun who aptly summarises the common understanding of the minjung when he states that: "The term minjung is used to refer to people contrasted with the elite, privileged class, or the ruling class. The minjung designate those who have no political power, wealth, social status, nor high education."[26] What he indicates is that, if a person possesses one of these categories, he or she does not belong to the minjung. As power, money, status and education go together, the people who lack all of them are those who suffer most in any historical situation. *The minjung are the poor people in society.*[27]

I.3. Perception of Minjung as the Subjects of History

According to Jin-Ho Kim, one of the premises that minjung theologians can never yield is the belief that minjung is the subject of history.[28] He also notes that this belief lies behind the theologising of minjung theologians and provides the impetus for their

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direct confrontation, not to engage in the theologisation for theologisation's sake. See his, "Crisis of Minjung Theology," *Shinhak Sasang* (The Theological Thought) 82 (9, 1993), p. 189.

[26] Y. Hyun, "Incarnation in the Minjung," (in Korean) in *Minjung and Korean Theology*, p. 15.

[27] Jeong-Joon Kim, "The Old Testament Basis for Minjung Theology," (in Korean) in *Minjung and Korean Theology*, p. 29, understands the minjung as those who are alienated and poor among the general public who are ruled.

practice *here and now* in Korea.[29] Minjung theologians presented their theological reflections on the basis of that belief, thus expressing their hope to bring the social change through the conscientization and mobilisation of the minjung. They also supported those who were involved in the minjung movement with the product of their theological reflections that has developed into minjung theology. Therefore, it is necessary to examine how minjung theologians understand the subjecthood or subjectivity of the minjung. Here we are not interested in explicating minjung historiography in general,[30] but we need to examine how these minjung theologians understand the historical subjectivity or subjecthood of the minjung, because they take the belief in the subjecthood of the minjung as the hermeneutical preunderstanding for describing not only Jesus' identity but also his teachings and practice.

The Meaning of Historical Subjectivity of the Minjung

Minjung theologians share the basic belief in the historical subjectivity or subjecthood of the minjung, so we need to examine how minjung theologians understand it.

1) Yong-Bock Kim argues that the minjung are the subjects of history and describes the relationship between minjung and political power based on that understanding of history.[31] It is worth quoting in full how Kim expresses his understanding of the minjung subjectivity:

> [The minjung's] subjectivity is being realised through their struggles against oppressive powers and repressive social structures. In so doing, the minjung have risen up to be subjects of their own destiny, refusing to be condemned to the fate of being objects of manipulation and suppression. The minjung have their own stories to tell over against the stories or the dominant ideologies of the rulers. When we say that the minjung are the subjects of history, we are not exalting them in political terms but are affirming as

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[28] Jin-Ho Kim, "The Minjung as Subjects of History: Re-investigating the Minjung Subjectivity," *Shinhak Sasang* (Theological Thought) 80 (Spring, 1993), p. 21.

[29] *Ibid.*

[30] Chai-Yong Choo, "Korean Minjung and the History of Protestant Church," in *Minjung and Korean Theology*, p. 218, notes that minjung historiography presupposes that history is formed and progresses by the minjung. This remark seems to be another way of describing the subjectivity of the minjung, but it is not quite clear in what sense history is shaped by the minjung.

[31] Y. Kim, "Messiah and Minjung," p. 183.

authentic their identification of themselves as the masters of their own history which is told in their socio-political biography.[32]

Here Kim does not explain what he means by 'the historical subjectivity of the minjung,' but simply refers to the way the minjung realise their historical subjectivity, i.e., 'struggles against the oppressive powers and the repressive social structures'. Moreover, we find conflicting remarks in this statement about the historical subjectivity of the minjung. On the one hand, Kim argues that the minjung *are* the subjects of their own story and destiny, on the other hand, he holds that the minjung struggle *to become* the subjects of their own destiny. He also makes it clear that the minjung are not yet fully the subjects of history.[33]

In addition, this statement seems to confound rather than clarify the notion of minjung subjectivity. If oppressive powers and repressive social structures are the decisive factors that obstruct the realisation of the minjung's subjectivity, does it mean that the minjung's subjectivity cannot be fully realised until the oppressive powers and the repressive social structures are destroyed? What does it mean by the 'struggles against oppressive powers and repressive social structures'? Does it mean to overthrow them and take hold of political power on the part of the minjung or to create a society with non-oppressive powers and non-repressive social structures? Given that the minjung struggles against oppressive powers and repressive social structures are interpreted as their struggles to be subjects of their own destiny, how should we understand his observation that the minjung are historically *always* in the condition of being ruled? If there also exist the stories of the rulers, not only the minjung stories, in history, should we not admit at least that the rulers are the subject of their *own* stories and destiny in the same way as the minjung are the subject of their own stories and destiny? If the minjung's subjectivity indicates the fact that they are the masters of their own history, is it not more appropriate to say that the minjung are subject of their *own* history rather than of history in general? If the minjung's subjectivity is something to be claimed and realised through struggles, is it not right to

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[32] Y. Kim, *ibid.*, p. 186.

[33] *Ibid.*

say that the minjung are constantly in the process of becoming the subject of their stories and destiny?

In relation to these questions, we may analyse Kim's understanding of the historical subjectivity of the minjung. According to the above-quoted statement, Kim seems to allude to minjung revolts against the oppressive political powers as the way the minjung realise their historical subjectivity. However, his political description of the minjung refutes his argument for minjung subjectivity. Here we need to recapture Kim's description of the minjung in relation to his presentation of minjung subjectivity.

According to Kim, the minjung and the political power occupy separate realms as two distinct historical entities that co-exist within society. He seems to refine the concept of historical subjectivity of the minjung by using those expressions 'permanent reality in history' or 'concrete reality in history'.[34] Moreover, he affirms that historically the minjung are *always* in the condition of being ruled,[35] though he adds a comment that the minjung seek to overcome that situation.[36] It then becomes obvious that Kim understands the minjung, a social entity contrasted to the ruling political power, as the permanent object of ruling under the political power. The minjung is not understood primarily as the political force that brings the social change including the oppressive and exploitative political powers; they simply experience the comings and goings of political powers and transcend the power structures which attempt to confine them through the unfolding of their stories.[37] Kim does not seem to suggest any form of political involvement of the minjung or their confrontation with political power, but only refers to their seeming escape from the oppressive reality by expressing their sufferings and hope in the form of stories. If the minjung can be described as the permanent reality of history, they must remain as the minjung in any political system. As soon as they succeed in overcoming the political situation, they will cease to be the minjung, and the description of the minjung as the permanent reality will have to be

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[34] *Ibid.*

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

[36] It is not clear what he means by 'overcoming that situation'. It may refer to the minjung struggle for liberation from oppression or to the struggle that takes the place of the rulers. In either case, it is obvious that the minjung attempt to liberate themselves from minjung status to non-minjung.

[37] Y. Kim, *ibid.*

nullified, for the minjung become the non-minjung. So, Kim contrasts the objective reality of the minjung with their subjective experiences that form their social biography. Referring to the minjung as subjects of their own stories and destiny, Kim seems to understand minjung subjectivity on the existential level and dehistoricise the minjung reality.[38]

Kim confirms our observation by stating that the subjectivity of the minjung will be realised in the messianic Kingdom.[39] The messianic Kingdom that Kim refers to here is the messianic Kingdom described in the book of Revelation. Thus, according to Kim, the minjung become the subject of history only eschatologically. He clarifies the eschatological realisation of minjung subjectivity by stating that the historical subjectivity of the minjung is not realised by the inherent power of the minjung or by the inner movement or laws of history, but by the intervention of the messianic politics (i.e., the messianic Kingdom) into history from the future.[40] In the process, the minjung are transformed into the subjects of history and a new history emerges.[41] Then it becomes quite obvious that Kim does not imagine the minjung revolts as the way to achieve the minjung subjectivity. He declares unequivocally that:

> In the historical reality the minjung do not become the subjects of history but are defined by the ruling system. Thus the minjung find themselves situated to be ruled by the ruling class, and consequently the historical experience of the minjung is characterised as suffering. Seen from the eschatological perspective of history, the minjung, though suffering at present, are in the process of becoming the subjects of history depending on the hope and promise that they will become the subjects of history. Thus the minjung struggle to become the subjects of history.[42]

It seems obvious that this statement contradicts his previous argument that the minjung rise up in resistance against the unjust and oppressive rule to claim their subjectivity in

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[38] In the context of comparing the minjung history with that of the proletariat, Y. Kim makes a remark that seems to dehistoricise the minjung history: "Minjung history has a strong transcendental or transcending dimension---a beyond history---which is often expressed in religious form. There is a close relationship between religion and the minjung's perception of history." Kim, *ibid.*, p. 184.

[39] Y, Kim, "The Social Biography of the Minjung and Theology," (in Korean) in *Minjung and Korean Theology*, p. 371.

[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 371-372.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 372.

history. If the subjectivity of the minjung is realised only when the eschatological messianic kingdom intervenes into history, the possibility of the minjung to achieve their own subjectivity through minjung revolts must be excluded.

2) Nam-Dong Suh describes the historical subjectivity of the minjung in a different way. After surveying the history of Korea, Suh summarises the position thus: the minjung were the objects of the ruling class for a long time, and did not attempt to become the ruling power through a revolutionary process, but prepared the ground to become the ruling power.[43] According to Suh, this historical process shows that the minjung gradually liberate themselves from the position of being a historical object and become a historical subject.[44] Suh explicitly links the emergence of the minjung as the ruling power with their becoming the subject of history. He holds that minjung history bears testimony to the fact that the minjung became the subjects who determine their own social situation and destiny.[45] Suh does not clarify what he means by 'determining their own social situations and destiny', but we may elicit from his understanding of the Donghak Peasant Rebellion (1894) how he perceives the subjectivity of the minjung. Suh perceives that in the Donghak rebellion the oppressed minjung defined themselves as the subject of their own history and destiny.[46] Then it becomes clear that Suh understands the subjectivity of the minjung in terms of their revolt against the oppressive rule.

3) Chi-Ha Kim, who provides seminal ideas for minjung theology, describes the subjectivity of the minjung as manifested in restoring social justice. He argues for the historical subjectivity of the minjung in the statement he made at his trial:

> Authority or power originally comes from the minjung. But when it is institutionalised it becomes a tool to suppress the minjung in whom its roots lie. Therefore, in the course of history, the minjung have risen up in revolts to reappropriate the power which they lost

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[42] *Ibid.*, p. 371.

[43] N. Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," p. 169.

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

> and in so doing restore social justice. In my opinion, when the ruling power or authority perverts justice and takes an anti-minjung stand, then justice is on the side of the minjung and injustice on the side of the ruling authority. Throughout the course of human history we witness the constant change from the rule of power to the rule of the minjung, from the history of dictatorship and oppression to that of liberation and democracy.[47]

He observes that the minjung rise in revolts when power and authority suppress the minjung, pervert justice and take an anti-minjung stand. This observation confirms the correlation between the subjectivity of the minjung and the revolt against the unjust and oppressive power. If we put it in another way, the minjung will not rise in revolts when ruling power or authority executes justice. If justice is established within the society, then the subjectivity of the minjung need not be claimed. It will be hard to generalise that the course of human history shows the constant change from the rule of power to the rule of the minjung. What is implied in Kim's statement is that, if the ruling class exercise their authority on behalf of the minjung, rather than oppressing them, then the subjectivity of the minjung is actually realised. The construction of a liberated and democratic society will indicate the same point. The contrast of dictatorship with democracy confirms our analysis. What is envisioned here is not the replacement of the oppressive government with the minjung government. It is the rule of liberation and democracy in which the government exists for the people. The hope expressed by Chi-Ha Kim is that the government will exercise authority on behalf of the minjung and build a just society thereby obviating the need for the minjung to rise in revolts to claim their historical subjectivity.

From the above discussion, we may conclude that minjung theologians do not clearly explain what they mean by the historical subjectivity of the minjung. They only refer to the minjung revolts as the means to claim or to realise the minjung's subjectivity. They actually admit that the minjung are permanently subjected to the ruling class in historical reality, which contradicts their argument for minjung subjecthood.

Social Biography of the Minjung

Minjung theologians refer to historical evidence to substantiate their belief that the minjung is the subject of history. They hold that the historical subjectivity of the

minjung is best expressed in the stories of the minjung in history. Yong-Bock Kim introduces the concept of social biography to refer to these stories of the minjung.[48] In other words, minjung social biography means the stories that contain and reveal the minjung's despair, desire, joy and hope.[49] Kim explains that the social biography or the social history of the minjung perceive the minjung as the subject of history and the minjung stories as the core of history.[50] It is worth quoting his statement in full to examine how Kim understands the social biography of the minjung:

> The identity and reality of the minjung is known not by a philosophical or scientific definition of their essence or nature, but rather through their own stories -- their social biographies which the minjung themselves create and therefore can tell best. This story of the minjung as their social biography is told *vis-a-vis* the power structure that rules the people; and therefore power is the antagonist in the story, while the people are the subjects. The minjung themselves are the protagonists. Thus the story of the minjung entails story and destiny.[51]

According to Kim, the social biography of the minjung is both the story of the minjung's suffering, for the suffering of the minjung is the picture of history, and also the story of the minjung movement, for it contains the question about overcoming the suffering of the minjung.[52] So minjung theologians refer to the social biography of the minjung as the stories that expose the suffering of the minjung and pictures the way to solve their suffering.

N. Suh suggests that there are two ways of obtaining the minjung stories. The minjung stories are hidden in historical documents. He holds that the minjung stories are not directly narrated in historical documents, for, according to him, the historical writings have usually centred on the ruling power. So he asserts that the historical documents should be read from below, with the minjung perspective, rather than from above, i.e., with the rulers' perspective. The other way of obtaining the social

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[47] Quoted from N. Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," p. 155.

[48] Y. Kim, "The Social Biography of the Minjung and Theology," p. 370.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 372.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 371.

[51] Y. Kim, "Messiah and Minjung," p. 184.

[52] Y. Kim, "The Social Biography of the Minjung and Theology," pp. 382, 384.

biography of the minjung is to identify the language of the minjung. In other words, the stories that the minjung tell using their own language reveal the reality of the minjung.

Minjung Social Biography in History

Minjung theologians regard the history of the minjung movement in Korea as the important reference for minjung theology. According to minjung theologians, the subjecthood of the minjung is identified in the history of the minjung movement in which the minjung have defined themselves and struggled for their own liberation.[53]

Nam-Dong Suh cites fourteen cases in the history of Korea that show the minjung movement. He finds the first case of minjung revolution in *The Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms*, edited by Bu-Shik Kim, the Prime Minister of Koryo Dynasty. Suh states that: "When King Bongsang (A.D. 292-300) exploited the people, they achieved a peaceful turnover of political power in A.D. 300 under the leadership of Prime Minister Changjori. It was the voice of the minjung which helped bring about this revolution."[54] In the same article, Suh even argues that Muentzer's peasant revolution was an unauthentic minjung revolution because Muentzer was not a minjung, but played as their leader.[55] But here Suh explicitly states that the peaceful turnover of the political power was achieved under the leadership of the Prime Minister. It is hard to understand how he can describe the event as a case of minjung revolution, in view of his argument that in the authentic minjung revolution the minjung themselves must be the subjects of the revolution. By stating that it was the *voice* of the minjung that

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[53] Y. Kim describes the minjung movement in the history of Korea in terms of minjung messianism. He links the struggle of the minjung in history to realise their own destiny to be the free subjects of history with their participation in the Messianic Kingdom. Cf. Y. Kim, "Messiah and Minjung," p. 187. He regards the messianic movements observed in the history of Korea as evidence of the minjung's struggles for historical subjectivity.

[54] N. Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," p. 169.

[55] N. Suh argues that Muentzer's revolution could not be the minjung revolution, even though it might have succeeded. N. Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," p. 166, states that: "In actual fact, if he [Muentzer] had succeeded in his revolution, he may have betrayed the revolution of the minjung which he himself advocated. His most important contribution to minjung theology is the assertion that the minjung themselves must achieve their own salvation. All the revolutionaries who lead the liberation and the salvation of the minjung may push forward their revolution, but, unlike Jesus, will not achieve the goal." Although Suh does not explicitly argue that the authentic minjung revolution should be without a leader, his observation that all the revolutionaries who lead minjung revolutions are bound to fail seems to indicate that the authentic minjung revolutions must be without a leader.

helped to bring about the successful change of power, he makes it clear that it was not the minjung who participated in the revolution to bring about the political change. Based on the concept of the minjung revolution as presented by Suh himself, we may dismiss this as an event that does not represent the minjung revolution.

We may find the same conflicting arguments in relation to the second case that Suh cites as the historical reference for minjung theology. He states that "the minjung were the *social base* for the political power of Koong-Ye of Tae-Bong and Kyon-Hwon of Hu-baik-je, who challenged the ruling system of the Unified Shilla."[56] He finds the evidence for this argument in the government document of Shilla found in one of the Buddhist temples named Chung-chang-won located in Nara, Japan. According to the document, the minjung who were exploited by the ruling class expressed their aspiration for the appearance of the Maitreya and both Kung-Ye and Kyon-Hwon appeared claiming to be incarnations of the Maitreya.[57] However, this case also refutes the concept of the minjung revolution as Suh presents it. It is not clear what he means by 'social base for the political power' but it seems to be obvious that the minjung were not the subjects who challenged the ruling system of the unified kingdom of Shilla.[58] Kung-Ye, who belonged to the aristocracy, built the kingdom of Late Koguryo, and Kyon-Hwon, a military leader from among to the farmers, rose to the leadership of the rebels who succeeded temporarily in building the kingdom of Late Baik-je.

The brief examination of these two cases may be sufficient to expose the inconsistency in presenting the historical references for minjung theology, but we need to examine the Donghak Peasant Rebellion and the March First Independence Movement more fully, as most of the minjung theologians accept these two events to be examples of minjung movement in the history of Korea.[59]

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[56] *Ibid.*

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] The ancient Korea was divided into three kingdoms: Koguryo (37 B.C.-A.D. 668) in the northern region, Baik-je (18 B.C.-A.D. 661) in the middle and south-western region, and Shilla (57 B.C.-A.D. 660) in the south-eastern region of the Korean peninsular. The kingdom of Shilla unified the three kingdoms in A.D 668.

1. The Donghak Peasant Rebellion (1884)

Minjung theologians regard the Donghak rebellion as the peak of the Korean minjung movement in history. Y. Kim even holds that the Donghak peasant rebellion was a messianic movement.[60] N. Suh argues that the Donghak rebellion provides an exemplary case in which the minjung emerged as the subject of their own destiny.[61] B. Ahn characterises the Donghak rebellion as a movement motivated by the patriotic spirit to save the nation from the crisis on the one hand and by the yearning to restore the rights of the oppressed and exploited minjung on the other hand. Ahn also describes the Donghak revolt as the eruption of the minjung's rage against their oppressors and exploiters. It was a minjung revolt, i.e., a peasants' revolt.[62] We will examine in what sense the minjung theologians refer to this peasant rebellion as the paradigmatic case that shows the historical subjecthood of the minjung. Though the rebellion took place in 1894, we need to survey briefly the history of Donghak.

The Birth of Donghak Movement: It was in 1860 that Che-U Choi (1824-1864) founded a new religion called Donghak. Choi named the new religion as *Donghak* meaning 'Eastern Learning' as opposed to *Sohak*, 'Western Learning' (i.e., Catholicism).[63] Choi, the founder of Donghak, was born to the third wife of Ok Choi, who was a *yangban*, and so could not expect to take the state examination to become a government official. After twenty years of wandering and experiencing the life of the minjung,[64] he returned to his home and announced the foundation of a new religion in 1860. His basic teaching was that "humanity is heaven", and he envisioned an egalitarian society. He propounded an apocalyptic idea that there will be an opening of

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[59] Y. Kim, "Messiah and Minjung," pp. 187ff.; N. Suh, "Confluence of Two Stories," *Studies on Minjung Theology*, pp. 63ff.; B. Ahn, *A Story of Minjung Theology* (Seoul: Korean Theological Study Institute, 1988), p. 223.

[60] Y. Kim, "Messiah and Minjung," p. 188.

[61] N. Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," p. 171.

[62] B. Ahn, "Nation, Minjung, Church," (in Korean) in *Minjung and Korean Theology*, p. 20.

[63] Woo-Keun Han, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

[64] In-Chol Kang, "Donghak as Religious and Social Movement," *Shinhak Sasang* (Theological Thought) 86 (Autumn, 1994), p. 64.

a new world and a new era will emerge after the impending destruction of the present world.

Donghak had greatly appealed to impoverished *yangban* class and to the farmers who had to suffer under the oppressive and exploitive socio-political system. It spread so rapidly that, within a couple of years, they had tens of thousands of believers and they had a branch in almost every district with its own leader. Though Donghak started as a religious and non-political movement, the government cracked down on it by 1863. Choi was arrested with twenty of his followers in 1863 and executed in the following year. The government persecution of Donghak paved the way for it to develop into a political movement. Otherwise, it would have remained a religious movement.[65] The leaders of Donghak movement began to plead with the government to rehabilitate its founder Choi posthumously and to grant them religious freedom. They tried to avoid a possible confrontation with the government.[66] In-Chol Kang notes that the leaders of the religion sought to secure religious freedom by refraining from any political gesture and compromising with the government, though some local leaders proposed to confront the government so as to achieve religious freedom and, if necessary, to overthrow the government.[67] When the plea of the Donghak believers was turned down by the government, in March 1871 Pil-Jae Lee, one of the local leaders, revolted against the government, disregarding the instruction from the leaders of Donghak movement not to revolt against the government. Lee was arrested and executed later in 1871. In this revolt a number of believers were also killed. The Donghak movement faced a further crisis as a result of the government's severe persecution after Lee's revolt and subsequently the number of believers decreased drastically. However, Shi-Hyong Choi re-organised the Donghak movement by the end of 1870s, improving the branch system and working out new doctrines and rites. By 1890 the number of followers increased to twenty thousand households. As the number

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[65] I. Kang, *ibid.*, p. 76.

[66] One instance that shows the effort on the part of the Donghak leaders to avoid confrontation with the government is their use of *Shang-Je* rather than *Chen-Ju*. When they came under the suspicion of the government that regarded Donghak as the same religion as Catholicism (i.e., *Chen-Ju Gyo*) on the basis of the use of the term *Chen-Ju*, Shi-Hyong Choi, the successor of Che-U Choi, stopped the use of the term *Chen-Ju* in the incantations that played important roles in their rites and practice in 1878, and replaced it with *Shang-Je*, the name of God in Confucianism. Cf. I. Kang, *ibid.*, p. 77.

of followers increased, the intervention and persecution of the government also increased. In the late 1880s, the voice of those leaders who supported more active reaction to the government persecution grew louder. However, the leader Shi-Hyong Choi and his staff prohibited any instigation within the movement to radical practice and issued a series of instructions requesting the followers to concentrate on personal discipline and meditation. However, as the number of the followers grew with the rapid spread of its teaching, the authority of the local leaders began to outgrow the control of leader Choi. Within the movement there appeared the two different groups: one group opted for a purely religious movement, focusing on personal discipline, and another group opted for the collective salvation through social change. In the exploitative and oppressive situation, the latter group emerged as the dominant force within the Donghak movement and staged a series of revolts against the government in spite of the policy of the movement's central committee not to resort to violence. Because of the volatile situation of the time, they were always ready to revolt on a large scale at any moment.

The Donghak Revolt: In January 1894, Bong-Joon Chon, one of the local leaders, ignited a full-scale minjung rebellion at Ko-Bu in Cholla Province, the south-western part of the country. Pyong-Gap Cho, who had been appointed district magistrate of Ko-Bu in 1892, encouraged farmers to cultivate the waste land abandoned after the great famine in 1888, promising them tax exemption. However, after the harvest, he taxed them, and the enraged farmers filed a petition to Cho's superiors, only to be dispersed by force. Realising that appeals to local government officials were of no avail, Bong-Joon Chon led about a thousand enraged farmers to destroy the irrigation system that they had been forced to build and to attack on government office. They took weapons stored in the armoury and distributed the tax grain to the needy people. After the incident, the central government dispatched a special inspector to investigate the case. Although the people expected that the government would deal fairly with the people and expose the injustice of the local government officials, the special inspector blamed only the Donghak religion for the incident, and arrested the believers and destroyed their homes. In March, Chon and other local Donghak leaders in Cholla Province began the full-scale revolutionary campaign against the oppressive

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[67] *Ibid.*

government. They attacked the government offices and executed several district magistrates. Their campaign was successful at the beginning and they made two major demands: equitable taxation and the halt of the economic aggression of the Japanese.

After negotiating with Donghak leaders, the central government set up Correction Offices in each of the fifty-three districts in Cholla Province and appointed the Donghak members as its staff to act in an advisory capacity to each district magistrate under the general supervision of Bong-Joon Chon.[68] Once the organisation of the Correction Offices was completed, the Donghak leaders made their demands public in a formal document of twelve items. The Donghak leaders not only demanded that the illegal extortion of the government officials be stopped but also called for revolutionary measures to abolish the old status system and to redistribute the farmland. In connection with the economic aggression of the foreign powers, they demanded to punish those who collaborated with the Japanese. Unable to handle the Donghak revolt, the government requested China to send troops. Upon receiving the notification from China of their decision to send troops to Korea, Japan acted swiftly to send a large force of seven thousand troops. The Japanese not only disarmed all the Korean troops but started an unprovoked attack upon the Chinese ships and the Chinese units on land on the 25th of July. The Japanese army defeated most of the Chinese troops on the 29th of July, and the Sino-Japanese war ended with a series of swift victories for Japan. Far outnumbered, the Donghak peasant army could not withstand the Japanese troops who were armed with modern training and equipment, and were finally beaten by them. The number of people killed during this revolutionary campaign is estimated to have been more than three hundred thousand.[69] Bong-Joon Chon was arrested on the 28th of December, and most of the rebel leaders were also arrested. In December 1894 when their defeat became obvious, Shi-Hyong Choi, who managed to escape arrest, ordered the Donghak leaders to disperse and he himself went into hiding with some of the Donghak leaders. The Donghak rebellion that resisted the oppression of the government and the economic exploitation of foreign powers was finally crushed by the Japanese troops.

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[68] Woo-Keun Han, *op cit.*, p. 409.

[69] Ki-Baek Lee, *The History of Korea: A New Study* (Seoul: Il Cho Gak, 1996), p. 287ff.

Interpretation of the Donghak Rebellion: Although the Donghak rebellion was successful temporarily, it ended up in bloody defeat because of the ruthless Japanese troops and was not able to bring about the desired changes in society. By observing that this patriotic minjung movement was ruthlessly persecuted and completely crushed by the rulers with the assistance of Japanese troops, Ahn actually admits that the movement failed in achieving its goals of bringing a just society by eradicating the exaction of the officials and by attempting to expel foreign powers.[70] In what sense, then, does this rebellion show the historical subjecthood of the minjung? Based on our survey of the rebellion, we may say that the Donghak rebellion was ignited in reaction to the unjust government officials who exploited the people. What minjung theologians perceive in this rebellion as the paradigm for the minjung movement seems to be the fact that the minjung rose up against the unjust ruling system. However, it is difficult to perceive the minjung revolt against the unjust government officials as the manifestation of the minjung subjecthood in history.

2. March First Independence Movement (1919)

This mass movement of the Korean people in revolt against the Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945) was the greatest of such movements in their history. Y. Kim interprets the March First Independence Movement as the most dramatic manifestation of minjung messianism in Korea.[71] He maintains that it was the minjung who were the motivating force of the movement. He asserts that the movement is significant in that it supplies the motivation, scope, and direction for the minjung to create their own new future.[72] We need to examine the March First minjung revolt to evaluate whether this characterisation of the movement by the minjung theologians is correct.

Development of the Movement: After defeating the Russian troops in Korea (1905), the Japanese propelled their policy to annex Korea to the Japanese empire. In August 1910, by signing the so-called Korean-Japanese Annexation Draft, Korea became a Japanese colony. The Korean people staged several independence movements in order to resist the colonial rule that had dominated them through harsh

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[70] *Ibid.*

[71] Y. Kim, "Messiah and Minjung," p. 189.

measures. Chang-Ho Ahn founded the *Shin-min-hoe* (New People's Society), a secret group for independence, to cultivate nationalism in education, business, and culture. In December 1910, the Japanese arrested *Shin-min-hoe* leaders and about six hundred Christians under the pretext that they had uncovered a plot to assassinate the Japanese Governor-General. In 1917, students at Soong-Shil School at Pyungyang founded the *Kook-min-hoe* (People's Assembly) with local Christians and supported those people involved in the independence movement in exile. Most of the members were arrested by the Japanese police.

The Korean independence movement was invigorated by the principle of self-determination, one of the fourteen points proposed by the then American President Woodrow Wilson at the Paris peace conference in 1919. According to this principle, the existence of a nation and the manner in which it was governed were to be freely determined by its people, and no people was to be dominated by others against their will.[73] Although the principle was proposed specifically in relation to the post-war European world, Korean people, especially the independence movement groups in exile, resorted to the principle to achieve independence. The independence movement groups sent representatives to the World Socialist Conference held in Stockholm in 1917 and to the peace conference in Paris in 1919. They also sent representatives to Japan to contact Korean students there to read a manifesto at the Korean Y.M.C.A. in Tokyo on 8th February 1919, demanding Korea's independence. In order to draw the attention of the outside world, the leaders of the independence movement at home and abroad planned a national protest. They planned to read a declaration of independence drawn up and signed by thirty-three religious leaders. The reading of the declaration of independence and the subsequent demonstration were organised to start simultaneously all over the country. For this uprising, the religious organisations of Christianity, *Chon-Do-Gyo* (formerly the Donghak religion) and Buddhism were mobilised. The local religious leaders acted as organisers in the country in close co-operation with the different religious groups. The demonstration was planned to be a peaceful one with no armed revolt or violence involved. But, the Japanese police and soldiers fired on unarmed crowds and it is estimated that at least seven thousand

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[72] *Ibid.*

[73] Han, *op. cit.*, p. 474.

people died. Though an estimated two million people took part in fifteen hundred demonstrations, the movement failed to achieve independence or to make other foreign powers support Korea.

Subject of the Movement: Who was the subject of the movement? Minjung theologians argue that it was the minjung who acted as the subject in this movement. Chai-Yong Choo argues that: "Of the people who constituted the movement, farmers were 59 percent, Christians 22 percent, and men in their twenties 40 percent. The farmers were representatives of the suffering people in that time. With 22 percent Christians, we may say that the Christian minjung provided much of the leadership of this movement."[74] It is not clear whom he designates by the 'Christian minjung'. He seems to equate the minjung with the farmers. Then, do the Christian minjung mean the farmers who were Christians at the same time? If that is so, it is not correct to argue that it was the Christian minjung who played the leadership role in the movement. Ahn also argues that "in this independence movement it was the pure minjung who resisted the colonial power."[75] Again it is not clear what he means by the "pure minjung". Seeing that he refers to the rapacious Korean government that sold the nation to Japan, he seems to designate by the term minjung the whole people of Korea under colonial rule. However, in the context of discussing the role of the church in the dictatorial regime, he mentions specifically that the church, not the minjung, played a pivotal role in the movement: "The Christian church at the beginning of its history in Korea played a pivotal role in awakening the consciousness of the minjung."[76] Also, in referring to the role of the Christian Church today, Ahn points out: "Today the Christian church in Korea is repenting her past behaviour. Many people think that the Church's social and political involvement goes beyond the mission of the church, but actually what the Church have to do is to repent for neglecting her duty towards the nation and towards the minjung. . . The church sided with the government and did not listen to the cry of the minjung."[77] Here we read that Ahn clearly distinguishes the Church from the

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[74] Chai-Yong Choo, "A Brief Sketch of Korean Christian History from the Minjung Perspective," in *Minjung Theology. People as the Subjects of History*, p. 77.

[75] B. Ahn, "Nation, Minjung, Church," p. 20.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[77] *Ibid.*

minjung and emphasises the Church's role for the minjung, admitting the Church's leadership in educating the minjung.

As we have examined, it seems difficult to say for certain that the motivating force behind the March First Independent Movement was the minjung. As the movement failed to achieve the independence of Korea, we find it hard to admit that the movement provides a paradigm for the minjung to create their own new future. What we perceive in the March First Independence Movement is the spirit to revolt against the unjust system in which the people have to lead inhumane life because of colonial/political oppression and economic exploitation.

Minjung Social Biography in Stories

There are two novels written in the seventeenth century that represent minjung stories: *The Tale of Hong Gil-Tong Hong* and *The Tale of Choon-Hyang*. Our concern in this section is to examine the stories that are regarded by minjung theologians as representing the subjectivity of the minjung and also to determine whether the stories can legitimately be used as references for a minjung theology that draws the minjung revolts from the stories.

The Tale of Hong Gil-Tong

This is the first novel written in the Korean vernacular language, i.e., *Hangul*, by Ho-Kyun (1569-1618). Ho, who belonged to the *choong-in* class, wrote the novel in *Hangul* so that the common people could read it easily. The story was popular not only during the Yi dynasty when the *min* had to suffer under the oppression and exploitation of the ruling class but also in the history of modern Korea. According to the story, there once lived a man named Hong who was a retired high government official (*Pan-So*) of Yi dynasty. He had two sons. The first son In-Hyung was born to his wife named Ryu, and the second son Gil-Tong was born to his servant named Choon-Sum. From childhood, Gil-Tong showed extraordinary talents and people had high hopes for him to become a great figure in the future. Whenever he was praised by people, Gil-Tong's heart was broken, for, however excellent and smart a person he may be, the person born to a *yangban*'s concubine, i.e., belonging to the *choong-in* class, cannot take the state-run examination to become a government official. Deeply

discouraged, Gil-Tong quit his learning of Confucius and Mencius, and instead began to practise martial arts. He acquired some supernatural powers through his master of martial arts, especially the technique of using the sword to control the natural world.

There was another concubine to Hong *Pan-so* named Cho-Ran. She hated Gil-Tong and his mother and plotted with a *mudang* ('shamans, mostly female') to kill Gil-Tong. One night, through his exercise of supernatural power, Gil-Tong arrested Teuk-Jae sent as an assassin by Cho-Ran, and he was told everything about the plot to kill him. Gil-Tong killed the assassin and the *mudang*. But he left Cho-Ran alive because he knew his father loved her. The next morning Gil-Tong bade farewell to his father Hong *Pan-so* and his mother and left home. He then joined a group of bandits and immediately became their chief. He trained his men well and formed them into a strong army. He called his party *Hwal-bin-dang*[78] and attacked those who became rich by exploiting and oppressing the people and distributed the wealth to the poor. Here are two examples of how they attacked the rich. One day, one of his men reported that the Buddhist monks at Hae-In Temple, one of the biggest temples in Korea, enjoyed sumptuous food everyday while the people seriously suffered from hunger. Gil-Tong disguised himself as a *yangban*'s son who chose to stay at the temple to study in preparation for the higher state-run examination. Initially, he donated twenty sacks of rice for his rent, but at the feast that was presented to welcome Gil-Tong, he put sand in his rice bowl and accused the monks for doing that unpardonable thing. Although the monks pleaded for forgiveness, Gil-Tong commanded his men to arrest all the monks and to empty their storage so as to distribute the rice to the hungry people. On another occasion, Gil-Tong summoned his men to tell them that the governor of Ham-Kyung Province[79] made the people suffer severely. When they attacked the government headquarters the governor was having a feast with his staff. Gil-Tong turned the feast tables over and humiliated the governor by making him kneel down before Gil-Tong in front of all his staff.

The king became infuriated about Gil-Tong's activities and put Hong *Pan-so* into prison. The king then appointed Gil-Tong's brother In-Hyung as governor of Kyung-Sang Province for one year with the mission to arrest Gil-Tong. But Gil-Tong

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[78] The word *Hwal-bin-dang* literally means 'a party that rescues the poor and destitute.'

appeared to the king and said: "Though I may be called a thief, I never robbed the poor people of the food. I just punished the rich rulers who were enjoying the wealth and power by sucking the blood of the people. After ten years I will leave this country permanently, so do not worry too much." During those ten years Gil-Tong and his party continued to attack the rich and the powerful to help the poor and the oppressed. At the end of the promised ten years, Gil-Tong posted notices all around the country to the extent that if the king appoints him as Home Minister he would cease his attack on the government officials. There arose a fierce opposition among the royal staff that it was impossible to appoint a person of such low status, one born to a servant, as Home Minister. In spite of the opposition, the king announced that he appointed Gil-Tong as Home Minister. Then Gil-Tong appeared to the king and his royal staff and said: "Born into a low class, I had had many grievances. But today the king released my *han* ('the accumulated grief'), so there is nothing more for me to desire. The ten years that I promised have passed, so I will leave this country with my men to a far away land." Gil-Tong and his party went off to an island called *Yuldo* and built a utopian country there.

Y. Kim holds that this story represents the messianic tradition in Korea.[80] According to Kim, the kingdom that Gil-Tong established at Yuldo is the messianic kingdom which is characterised by the absence of social division and contradiction between the *yangban* class and the common class.[81] However, it seems doubtful whether we can accept Kim's interpretation of the story as representing the messianic tradition as he understands it in the history of Korea. This is because Kim considers the messianism associated with any form of leadership role of a hero or elitist cults as the negative messianism and rejects such messianism.[82] According to his definition of messianism, there should be no hero or leader in the social biography of the minjung. But Kim seems to contradict his own argument by using the term "hero" in referring to Gil-Tong in his own summary of the story: "The alienated social *hero* Hong Gil-Tong, like the author a *choong-in*, leaves home and joins a group of bandits, because he

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[79] At that time, Korea had eight administrative districts called Provinces.

[80] Y. Kim, "Messiah and Minjung," p. 188.

[81] *Ibid.*

[82] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

cannot fulfil his life's ambitions and goals in the existing society. . . The *hero* of the story attacks the rich and distributes wealth to the poor. This creates great social disturbances. Finally the *hero* is persuaded by his father to leave the country, and he goes off to the island called Yuldo."[83] Based on Kim's own argument, we may say that by designating Gil-tong as a "hero" Kim himself disqualifies the story as the social biography of the minjung.

Although the characterisation of the novel as representing the messianic tradition in Korea cannot be accepted, we need to identify the minjung reality pictured in the novel and the message that Ho-Kyun wanted to deliver to his readers. What we read in this story is a piece of social criticism that created wide sympathy among the common people. First, Ho-Kyun criticises the class system that caused much *han* among the lower classes who had to suffer under the oppressive system. Though endowed with extraordinary talents, Gil-Tong was not allowed the opportunity to develop his talents because of the social barriers accompanying the class distinction. By making Gil-Tong Home Minister at the end of the story, Ho envisions a society where the class system is abolished and even the people of the lower classes can fully develop their humanity. Secondly, he exposes the injustice of the rich and the powerful who exploited and oppressed the common people. The ruling class, together with the religious leaders of Buddhism, were alienated from the life of the common people. Instead of serving the needs of the people, the political and religious leaders oppressed the people in order to amass wealth for themselves. Both the political and religious leaders lost support of the people, and became objects of people's resentment. Because the ruling class lacked the concern for the people, the only option was to redress the social injustice. It seems to be clear that Ho's vision was not to bring an overall transformation of the existing social structure of Yi dynasty through revolutionary means. Although Gil-Tong embraced *han* because of the social barrier, Ho focuses only on the release of Gil-Tong's individual *han*, neglecting the similar *han* that numerous other Gil-Tongs in the society had to live with. By establishing a utopian country on an island called Yuldo rather than transforming the unjust society into a just society, the story presents the ideal vision for a just society. We do not find any clue in the story that suggests minjung revolt against the unjust ruling system.

The Tale of Choon-Hyang

The second novel is *The Tale of Choon-Hyang*, also written in *Hangul* during the early part of the seventeenth century by an anonymous author. Since the time of its first appearance, the story has enjoyed a great popularity among Korean people, both past and modern. The story is generally classified as a love story, but it also contains criticism of the society that enforces strict class barriers. The story is as follows: Choon-Hyang Seong was a daughter born between a *kisaeng* ('female official entertainer registered to the local government') named Wol-Mae and a district magistrate Seong who was serving his term at Nam-Won, a town in Cholla Province, the south-western part of Korea. When the new governor's son Mong-Ryong Lee saw Choon-Hyang on the day of May festival, they fell in love. That night the Young Master Lee visits Choon-Hyang's house and asks her mother to give Choon-Hyang in marriage. Choon-Hyang's mother gives permission to Mong-Ryong to marry her daughter on the spot. Their happy days did not last long, for he had to go to Hanyang, the capital city of Seoul, following his father who had been given a new assignment in the court government. During the days of their separation, Mong-Ryong passes the high civil service examination with top honours and is appointed the king's secret inspector to carry out undercover inspections of the local government in the Cholla Province. In the meantime, Choon-Hyang suffers severely and is imprisoned for her refusal to become a mistress of the new district magistrate. She refused that in order to keep her marital pledge with Mong-Ryong. When she almost reaches the point of death, Mong-Ryong discloses his status as the king's secret inspector and removed the governor from his office and finally was reunited with the virtuous Choon-Hyang.

Although the theme seems to be conventional, the story contains sharp observation of contemporary reality. The story represents the way the people perceived their contemporary world in two aspects. First, the theme of the story is the love between Mong-Ryong, the *yangban*'s son, and Choon-Hyang, the daughter of a retired *kisaeng* who belonged to the *ch'on-min* class, the lowest class in society. This couple is unimaginable in reality, where marriage between classes was socially prohibited. Towards the end of the story, the author comments that all the people are born equal,

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[83] *Ibid.*

and there is nothing to make certain people more valuable than others. Choon-Hyang is said to have been well versed in the classics and also good at writing. In the story, she is presented as ethically and morally superior to the governor who represents the *yangban* class. Seeing that some satirical novels were written by the *yangban* class, themselves exposed to the defects of *yangban* life and thought,[84] it seems that contemporary people envisioned the possibility of a change in the social relationship among the classes. Secondly, the oppressive situation is emphasised in the story. When Mong-Ryong was heading for Nam-Won to carry out his mission as the king's secret inspector, he heard a group of peasants singing *The Song of Grey Hair*. The content of the song contains the peasants' call to go and file a petition to the government official and to tell him what they think. If a large number of people put their signature on the petition, it becomes a sort of public demonstration. The most significant exposure of the oppressive situation is delivered in the poem composed by Mong-Ryong for the governor at a birthday party that he attended disguised as a beggar, on the eve of his appearance as the king's secret inspector. After being given food, he wrote a poem that goes as follows: "The tasty wine in the golden casks is the blood of the numerous *min*. The delicious food on the inlaid plates is the flesh of the numerous *min*. When the candle-wax drips, the *min*'s tears drop. Where the joyous singings are heard loud, the resentment of the *min* rises." This short poem has come to symbolise a criticism of corrupt government officials and the unjust society in the subsequent history of Korea.

The *han* of Choon-Hyang is released not by minjung revolution that takes vengeance on the governor, but by her being reunited with Mong-Ryong who brought justice to the scene. Thus we cannot say that, in this story of the minjung, the author envisioned a minjung rebellion to claim the right of the minjung against the oppressive government officials.

I.4. Summary

Developed in Korea in the 1970s and 1980s when people suffered under harsh dictatorships, minjung theology provided a new perspective in grasping the teaching of the historical Jesus. As minjung theologians started their theological reflections based

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[84] The most outstanding social satires of that time dealing with the life of *yangban* were *The Tale of Yangban* and *The Tale of Hosaeng* written by Park Chi-Won in *Hangul*.

on their discovery and experience of the suffering minjung reality, and not on the speculative and detached research in the ivory tower, their concern to change the unjust reality dominated their theological reflections. Thus, minjung theologians took their concern for the minjung and for the change of the unjust reality as the hermeneutical key to describe the historical Jesus. Minjung theologians perceived the minjung as the subject of history and supported their perception by referring to historical events and minjung stories. However, what we find is that the definition of minjung among the minjung theologians is not always consistent and their argument for minjung subjecthood of history is also questionable. Moreover, the validity of minjung theology is questioned in a changing historical situation in Korea with the political democratisation of Korean society.

Although minjung theology served significantly in awakening the consciousness of the Korean people to the unjust reality, the solution minjung theologians suggested proved to be theologically less persuasive and practically less applicable to gain the support from the general public as well as from minjung pastors. The failure of minjung theology in gaining broad support from the Korean Christians is partly ascribed to the fact that it does not represent the intellectual and religious ethos of the Korean people.[85] The suggestion of minjung revolt as the answer to the unjust political and economic situation on the basis of the discovery of minjung reality and minjung subjecthood of history does not represent the intellectual tradition and the religious ethos in Korea, but echoes the Marxist approach to social problems and their solutions.[86]

We find that in our intellectual heritage in Korea there exists a tradition that provides a solution for social change in the politically oppressive and economically exploitative situation: the *mokmin* spirit. While the idea for social change perceived by

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[85] Jae-Shik Koh, "The New Reality and the Task of Minjung Theology," *Gidokgyo Sasang* ('Christian Thought') (1, 1993), p. 39, characterises minjung theology as a theology that attempts to identify the cry for minjung liberation within the culture and tradition of the Korean people and to fuse that with God's work of creation in our society. However, it is difficult to say that minjung theology represents the cultural and intellectual tradition of the Korean people in connection with the idea for social change. He seems to overlook that minjung theology did not pay attention to the existence of an authentic Korean theory of social change proposed by Yak-Yong Chong, a Korean thinker, which is more in tune with the ethos of the Korean people, i.e., social change through the *mokmin* praxis on the part of the rulers.

the minjung theologians does not reflect the intellectual heritage of the Korean people, the *mokmin* spirit represents the idea of social change formulated *from inside* the Korean reality. Thus we need to pay attention to the *mokmin* spirit in order both to perceive unjust reality and to present the idea of social change.

II. *Mokmin* as a Hermeneutical Starting Point

Although minjung theologians focus on the minjung as their starting point for doing theology and attempt to locate the tradition of the minjung movements or the minjung revolts in the history of Korea, we find another tradition that not only discovers the minjung reality but also delivers the message for the liberation of the minjung and social change. It is the idea of *mokmin* presented by Yak-Yong Chong (1762-1836) who was one of the major figures who implemented various social reforms during the reign of King Chong Jo (1776-1800) in Korea. Yak-Yong Chong was ousted by an opposition faction and banished in connection with the persecution of Catholicism to a remote place in the south-western part of Korea in 1801 where he had to stay for eighteen years. During his banishment he wrote *Mokmin Shimso*, consisting of forty-eight volumes, based on his first-hand experience and witness of the people's life.

II.1. The Concept of *Mokmin*

The word *mokmin* is a combination of two Chinese characters, *mok* and *min*. The word *mok* means "to govern" or "to serve or take care of," and the word *min* means "people". When we combine the two characters into one word as *mokmin*, it means "to serve and take care of the people". As the meaning indicates, the *mokmin* spirit is connected with those who are not poor *min*, but in particular with those in the ruling class.

In the preface of his *Mokmin Shimso*, Chong clarifies the concept of *mokmin* in connection with his demand that the ruling class should have the *mokmin* spirit and his criticism of their abuse of position to exploit the people:

> When emperor Sun succeeded emperor Yo in ancient China, he appointed twelve local governors called *mok* and let them serve (i.e., *to mok*) the people. To govern the people is to serve them. . . These days government officials are quick to secure personal interests

[86] Cf. Seyoon Kim, "Is 'Minjung Theology' a Christian Theology?" *Calvin Theological Journal*, 1987, p. 272.

> and care nothing about the welfare of the people. While the people become poor and miserable, and the number of dead bodies in the pits is growing, governors are fattened with delicious food and boast of nice dress. What a sad reality![87]

The question that Chong raises here is about the relationship between the *mok* and the *min*: "Do the *min* exist for the *mok* or do the *mok* exist for the *min*?" According to Chong, the rulers must exist for the people and not *vice versa*: "The *min* serve their governors through their hard labours. The *min* provide everything to make the governor's life easy and comfortable. The people wring their blood out of their bodies to feed their governors. Is it for the rulers that the *min* exist?. . . The rulers exist for the *min*."[88] Chong criticises it as an unjust reality that the people are heavy-laden and exploited by the rulers. He challenges that reality and tried to awaken the consciousness in the minds of the ruling class about the nature of their position in the political system. As the major cause of the predicament of the *min* was the exploitation by the local governors and their officials, the most desirable way to build a just society is for the rulers to have *mokmin* spirit in their exercise of power. The ruling class not only have to cease their exploitation and oppression of the *min*, but serve the *min* to lead a humane life. Chong envisioned a society in which the *mok* exist for the *min*, correcting the unjust reality where the *min* have to exist only for the rulers. We may summarise the concept of mokmin as follows: The term *mokmin* means to serve the *min* on the part of the *mok*, so the *mokmin* spirit is primarily required from the people who have political and economic power within society.

II.2. The Historical Context for *Mokmin*

As our purpose is to employ the concept of *mokmin* as a hermenutical starting point, we will focus in this section on the description of the particular social background within which Chong called upon the *mokmin* spirit.[89] An extensive investigation of the content of Yak-Yong Chong's *Mokmin Shimso* is beyond the scope of the present

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[87] Yak-Yong Chong, *Mokmin Shimso*, trans. by Mansung Nam (Seoul: Samjungdang, 1993), pp. 5-8.

[88] *Ibid.*

[89] For Chong's thought on human rights, it will be helpful to see Cho Kwang, "A Study on Chong Yak-Yong's Thought on Human Rights," (in Korean) in *Essays on Minjung* (Seoul: Korean Theological Institute, 1984), pp. 289-340. Also, for more extensive background of Chong's idea of *mokmin* spirit, see "Collection of Chong's Poems" in pp. 341-375 of the same book.

research and will not be necessary. To understand the significance of Chong's idea of *mokmin* properly, it will be helpful to examine the socio-economic context of the Yi dynasty.

The Class System of Yi dynasty

After founding a new dynasty, Yi Song Gye adopted neo-Confucianism as the official teaching,[90] substituting it for the Buddhism that had been the official religion of the Koryo Dynasty.[91] The most significant aspect of neo-Confucianism is found in its socio-political teaching. Confucianism not only accepted the traditional class system with the king at its head but consolidated the class distinction as something hereditary. It was inculcated that to live by the Confucian social and political teachings was to live in harmony with the universe. The social implication of this teaching was that the hierarchical society with its four distinct classes, governed by a bureaucracy with a king at its head, came to be seen as divinelyordained, and the crossing of the social boundaries was considered not only impractical but sinful.[92] The mode of life of each

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[90] It was by a Chinese scholar Chu-Hsi (1130-1200) that a new version of Confucianism was presented in the late twelfth century, which spread throughout China and became orthodox doctrine. What Chu Hsi did was to provide the practical ethical concepts of Confucianism with a metaphysical backing, restoring the mythical tradition of Confucianism. The scholar-officials of Koryo accepted neo-Confucianism and were inspired by its renovated teachings. W. Han, *The History of Korea*, p. 192, observes that the introduction of neo-Confucianism was the most notable event in the intellectual history of later Koryo times in that it not only revitalised the Confucian thought itself but brought about organised opposition to Buddhism. The teachings of neo-Confucianism awakened the reforming zeal in the *min*ds of the scholar-officials who became critical against social irregularities created by Buddhism.

[91] The Confucian scholar-officials of Yi dynasty showed hostility toward Buddhism. They regarded Buddhism as a social evil and laid severe restrictions on the practice of Buddhism, making it unlawful to build temples and limiting the number of monks and nuns. Many temples were closed and the social privileges once conferred on them were terminated. There were several reasons for the hostile measures of the Confucian scholar-officials. By the end of Koryo dynasty the moral and spiritual leadership of Buddhist monks had deteriorated and corrupt in their wealth and power. Woo-Keun Han, *ibid.*, p. 185, describes that the scholar-officials of Koryo became critical against the government because of the state-sponsored Buddhist festivals, the wealth and power of the Buddhist temples, the increase of the number of people withdrawing from their productive life and service to the state into the Buddhism for material comfort, and the violation of the central philosophy of Confucianism, i.e., the disruption of family and social relationships by renouncing family ties to become monks. Many of the scholar-officials advocated that state expenditures on temples and monuments should cease. Some of them even called for the confiscation of temples and monasteries and the nationalisation of their lands to eradicate the escape of the people from their duty to the state to seek easy life. So it seems natural that the Confucian scholar-officials of the new dynasty deemed Buddhism unacceptable as state religion. As a result, the social status of monks decreased, and they were maltreated by the *yangban* people.

social class and its social and political behaviour were determined by the teachings of Confucianism, and no class was allowed to violate the barriers drawn by Confucianist teachings, for they were hereditary. Based on this teaching, the social classes of Yi dynasty were clearly distinguished, and class boundaries were strictly enforced. The social classes during the Yi dynasty were divided into four: *yangban*, *choong-in*, *sang-min*, and *ch'on-min*.

The *yangban* class were the aristocrats who monopolised both political power and wealth. The *yangban* class consisted of *mun-ban* ('the civil officials'), and *mu-ban* ('the military officials').[93] Ever since the time of Shilla Kingdom, government officials were recruited through the state-run examination system which tested the knowledge of the Confucian classics. What is significant here is the fact that the educational opportunities were open only to the *yangban* class, thus reserving the positions of power only to the *yangban* class.[94] The *choong-in* ('the middle people') class were a small group of minor officials. They were inferior to the *yangban* but distinguished from the *sang-min*. There were roughly three categories of people belonging to this class. The technicians as well as the interpreters belong to this class. Among them local officials were selected to serve on the staff of local governors. Also the children of *yangban*'s concubine belong to this class. The *sang-min* ('the common people') class were mostly farmers who formed the majority of the population. A few of them owned their lands, but most of them were tenants either of private landlords or on government lands.[95] Though the *sang-min* class bore most of the burdens of the state by supplying the taxes, the labour and the military forces at the time of war, they were given no

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[92] Woo-Keun Han, *The History of Korea.*, p. 247. For example, marriages were arranged only within the boundary of the given social class. *Yangban* could marry only *yangban* and any transgression of this rule was severely punished.

[93] The literal meaning of *yang* is "both" and *ban* means "class". *Yangban* simply means "both classes".

[94] The *yangban* boys enter an elementary school called *sodang* at the age of seven or eight. They begin to learn the Chinese language and Chinese literature. Upon completing *sodang* after eight years, those living in Seoul enter the secondary school called *hakdang*, and those living outside Seoul enter the secondary school called *hyanggyo*. If they graduate from one of these schools, they are entitled to take the lower civil service examination. There was one state-run university called *songkyunkwan* that received two hundred students annually whose study was geared only to the preparation for the higher civil service examination. The other classes were barred from these educational opportunities and were denied any possibility to move upward on the social ladder.

[95] W. Han, *The History of Korea*, p. 250.

opportunities for education and were excluded even from the lowest state examination. The *ch'on-min* ('the low-born people') class were mostly slaves, actors, *mu-dang, ki-saeng* and butchers. They were treated by other classes with contempt.

The Socio-Economic Situation

During the time that Chong was writing *Mokmin Shimso*, Korean people were socially and economically under severe oppression of the ruling class. Because of the extreme corruption of the ruling class, the *min* were deprived of their land and subjected to the structural exploitation of the local governors. Land, the government loan of rice,[96] and military tax were the principal means the local governors used to exploit the *min*. We can picture the unjust situation of that time through the poems written by Chong. First, Chong describes the abject state of the *min* who became victims of exploitation by the local governors who abused the land tax system.

> I encounter homeless people wandering in the street
> With nothing in their possession.
> Where are they heading for?
> Because they can support neither their parents nor their children,
> The most basic human duty is to be violated.
> Even those farmers who once owned a large land became beggars,
> Visiting door to door for food.
> Their face turned pale, showing extreme lack of nutrition,
> And their dishevelled hair looks like entangled thread.
> Their life is in the flame.
> Who can save them except the local government?[97]

Chong exposed the miserable situation in which the *min*, the majority of whom were peasants, were deprived of their lands that enabled them to sustain their lives. He says that even those peasants who once owned a large land became homeless beggars wandering in the street and begging for food. He perceives that the increase of the number of poor peasants shakes the very foundation of the nation and criticises severely the ruling class who oppressed and exploited the *min*. He even reminds the

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[96] It is a kind of government welfare policy to relieve the sufferings of *min* from lack of food during springtime, several months before harvest. The *min* borrow rice from the local government to sustain life during hard times and pay back after the harvest.

[97] Chong, *Ie-yu-dang Collection*, (in Korean) I-2: 13a., quoted from Kwang Cho, "A Study on Chong Yak-Yong's Thought on Human Rights," (in Korean) in *Essays on Minjung*, p. 295.

king of the necessity to side with the *min* by reforming the land system.[98] Secondly, Chong criticises the government loan system that has become the means to exploit the *min*:

> They gave a sack of moth-eaten rice in spring,
> But command two sacks of quality rice in return.
> Even when we choose to pay by money,
> We have to pay the price of quality rice.
> By these profits, the governors fatten themselves,
> So even after one term as a governor they suddenly become rich.
> All the burdens are on the shoulders of *min*,
> Whose skin is off by the floggings of the rich.
> All sizes of vessels are extorted,
> Children are sold and cows are dragged away for money.[99]

The local government extorted everything from the *min*. The *min* had even their vessels, the most basic necessities for their life, extorted by the local governors and, moreover, had to sell their children as slaves to pay what was imposed on them. The government loan system was not operated for the welfare of the *min*, but was rather imposed on the people as their duty. Chong expresses a sense of impending crisis that, insofar as this institutionalised exploitation persists, the *min* will die and the nation will collapse.[100] So he not only criticised the system but called for an immediate reform. Thirdly, he exposes the unjust military tax.

> Children are wearing ragged clothes with bare shoulders.
> They never had warm trousers since birth.
> The first child is listed as a cavalry soldier since five years old.
> The second child becomes an army official at the age of three.
> The tax for them is five hundred *ryang*.[101]
> What can I do for them except wishing them to die soon?

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[98] Kwang Cho, *ibid.*, p. 295. Cho also cites from *Ie-yu-dang Collection* concerning the unjust distribution of lands among people: "In the south-eastern part of our country, out of one hundred households, only five receive rent for tenancy on their lands. Twenty-five households cultivate their own lands and the remainder seventy households are tenant farmers. If we reform the land system, there will be only five who will be offended by that. If we cannot implement a policy to invigorate ninety-five people for fear of the five rich people, how can we say that the King is presiding government affairs?" I-9: 61a.

[99] Chong, *Ie-yu-dang Collection*, I-5: 1b, quoted from Kwang Cho, *ibid.*, p. 297.

[100] Cf. Kwang Cho, *ibid.*, p. 298.

[101] "*Ryang*" is the monetary unit used in Chong's time in Korea.

What is this military tax?
Who has instituted this harsh law?
However hard we weave the cloth all the year round,
We do not afford to cover our bodies even once with the cloth.
A new cloth is taxed when a baby was born,
And even a dead man has to pay the tax.[102]

Chong attacked the local governors for exploiting only the powerless *min* and not imposing any tax on the local rich class. He exposed the miserable situation that makes the parents wish their children would die and exhorted the ruling class to change their exploitative attitude toward the *min*.

Identity of Min

Who are the *min* that Chong refers to as the object of *mokmin*? When Chong criticises the unjust socio-economic situations in which the *min* are suffering under the oppression and exploitation of the government officials, it seems that he was referring to the people belonging to the *sang-min* class that constituted the majority of the population. The *sang-min* class were most severely oppressed and exploited by the rulers with the extreme corruption of the *sam-jong* (three areas of administration) which administered the three major sources of state income: land tax, military tax, and the government rice loan system. However, it seems wrong to identify the *min* simply with one of the existing social classes, e.g., the *sang-min* class, within society, for we will have to consider the particular socio-economic situation. If the contemporary socio-economic situation was characterised by justice and equality, it would not have been necessary for Yak-Yong Chong to criticise the ruling class and call upon the *mokmin* spirit from them. It was because of the exploitation and oppression by the ruling class that the *min* became poor and miserable, and his experience of the poor and miserable state of the people (who mostly belong to the *sang-min* class) prompted Chong to present his idea of governing based on the *mokmin* spirit. What Chong demanded from the ruling class was not to govern for the benefit of the *sang-min* class in general, but to govern in justice and so not to make the *min* suffer poverty and hunger. The *min* whose miserable situation Chong sympathised with were those who actually fell into poverty and hunger, most of whom belonged to the *sang-min* class.

When the people belonging to the *sang-min* class suffered terribly in that socio-economic situation, it required no explanation that the life of those people belonging to the *ch'on-min* class, i.e., the lowest class of the society, must have been worse.

We may then conclude that the *min* whom Chong perceived as the object of *mokmin* were primarily those who suffer from poverty and hunger in the exploitative and oppressive socio-economic system. The identification of the *min* with any particular class within the society was only secondary to Chong's intention. We may conclude that the *min* whom Yak-Yong Chong referred to in presenting his idea of *mokmin* were those who suffered much material poverty. Thus, when we use the term *min* it should be taken to mean the materially poor and suffering *min*. It is our assumption that the same category of people, i.e., the poor and suffering *min*, exists both in the late 18th, early 19th centuries and in present-day Korea.

The Social Implications of the Mokmin Spirit

Mokmin and the Creation of Statusless Society

Not only did he expose the unjust reality, Chong also presents his idea for social change. Hyung-Taek Im argues that Chong's *min*-oriented political philosophy originated primarily in his first-hand experience of contemporary realities, though acknowledging the possible influence of past thinkers and Chong's own anthropological concerns.[103] Im observes that the important historical phenomena that formed the context for Chong's political ideas were the peasants' revolts and the awakening of intellectuals.[104] Here is a significant episode that shows how Chong perceived a peasants' riot:

> There was a peasant's riot at the town of Gok-San before Chong went there for the new post as high official. The lower officials imposed too much military tax and the town people complained about that. At last about a thousand people gathered at the headquarters of the local government and pleaded for correction. The person who led the group was Lee Kye-Shim. Lee did not fear the authority of the chief official of the town

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[102] Chong, *ibid.*, I-5: 1b, quoted from Kwang Cho, *ibid.*, p. 298.

[103] Hyung-Taek Im, "The Theoretical and Realistic Origin of Da-San's *Min*-Oriented Political Philosophy," (in Korean) in *Da-San's Political and Economic Philosophy*, FS Lee Woo-Sung (Seoul: Changjakgwa Bipyung Sa, 1990), p. 69.

[104] Im, *ibid.*, p. 71.

and explained their situation on behalf of the town people. When the official tried to arrest Lee, the people made a blockade with their bodies to protect him. There was a great commotion as the staff of the local government tried to dismiss the roaring crowd with violence. In the midst of the confrontation, Lee successfully escaped.

The duty to solve this matter was assigned to Chong. Some of the high ranking officials advised Chong to arrest some of the leaders of the town people and execute them. When Chong had just entered into the town of Gok-San, he found a man prostrating himself beside the road with a pleading document. It was Lee. The assistant officials suggested to Chong to arrest Lee and put him in the pillory, but Chong refused that suggestion saying, "Will the person flee when he came forward on his own accord?" As soon as Chong took the new office, he called Lee to him only to encourage and set him free, instead of punishing him. Chong made this remark to Lee: "The government officials cannot become above-board because the people do not stand against them to take care of their own safety. The local government has to grant a person like you with a thousand *ryang*."[105]

Chong's words given to Lee seemed to be highly significant in disclosing how Chong understood the ruling class and the social situation in which the peasants were rising up against the policies of local governments. He was well aware of the corruption of government officials and considered the people's resistance as the natural consequence of social injustice. When the rulers, who must serve the people by practising the *mokmin* spirit, failed to do so by exploiting and oppressing the people, the people are not discouraged from exercising their right and duty to stand against the rulers.[106] However, Chong does not envision the revolts as the ultimate means to bring about the changes in an unjust society.

As the political and economic situations had deteriorated, Chong perceived that the oppressive and exploitative socio-economic situations might bring about the collapse of the Yi dynasty. He may well have been aware of how desperately the people yearned for the establishment of a just society in which they are not discriminated on the basis of their class.

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[105] *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

[106] It will be difficult to interpret this remark as implying that Chong perceived the *min* as subject of politics and thus saw in the peasants' revolt a possibility for just government. *Contra* Im, *ibid.*, p. 75. It seems obvious that Chong highly regarded Lee's behaviour not because it showed the possibility for politics by the *min*, but because it will be necessary to prevent the ruling class from corruption. What Chong was emphasising here is the fact that, when the ruling class failed to have the *mokmin* spirit by exploiting and oppressing the *min*, the *min* must stand against their rulers, for their resistance will be justified on the basis of the political philosophy that see the *min* as the source of political power. The fact that he called upon the rulers to have the *mokmin* spirit implies that Chong envisioned the building of a just society primarily through the awakening of the ruling class.

Behind Chong's idea of *mokmin* as the essence of ruling lies his perception of *min* as the source of power. Chong emphasises the value of the *min* as the root and source of political power: "From where does the *Chon Ja* ('Son of Heaven' or 'Sovereign') come? From heaven like rain? From earth like a pond? Five houses constitute a village; a representative of five houses becomes a leader of the village. Five villages constitute a town; five leaders of the villages choose the leader of the town. . . The leaders of towns select a sovereign. Therefore, a sovereign is made by the *min*. Every sovereign comes from the *min* without exception."[107] By observing that the *min* is the source of political power, Chong tried not only to awaken the rulers to change their exploitative attitude towards the *min* but to equip the *min* with the critical awareness of the nature of political power.

Chong even expressed the radical idea of overthrowing the class system imposed on the Korean people in the name of the state teaching of Confucianism. He proposed the provocative idea of destroying the status system of his contemporary society. He was well aware of the rigid status system of his contemporary society where such a concept as equality of human beings could not be tolerated. But Chong dared to express his wish to make all the *min* as *yang-ban* and thus destroy the status system: "If my earnest wish could be realised, I would hope to make all the *min* in our country as *yangban*. Then we will have no *yangban* in our land, for, if the whole people become valuable human beings, we will no longer have the concept of valuable people."[108] This remark has significant social and religious implication in his contemporary society in that it attacks the accepted teachings by which the society of Yi dynasty was controlled. Chong was denying the social barriers strictly imposed by Confucian teachings, opting instead for a transformation of the social structures.

Mokmin and Social Justice

Chong's idea of *mokmin* spirit originated in his experiences of the oppressive socio-economic realities of his time. Chong was aware of the people's resentment and also of the peasants' resistance to oppressive realities. Chong expressed a deep sense of crisis

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[107] Kwang Cho, *op cit.*, p. 305.

[108] Yak-Yong Chong, *Ie-yu-dang Collections*, I-14: 23b, quoted from Kwang Cho, *ibid.*, p. 306.

that the foundation of the country was at stake because of the corruption and oppression of the ruling class.

As seen in his handling of the case of Lee Kye-Shim who led the town people to file a petition to the local government, Chong did not suppress those who stood up against corrupt rulers. However, he did not envision the peasants' revolt as the way to bring reforms in an unjust society. Chong's main work is *Mokmin Shimso* which he wrote during his eighteen years of banishment. The *Mokmin Shimso* contains the detailed guidelines that rulers could use as references for proper conduct in their effort to fulfil their duty of serving the people. It is thus obvious that Chong intended the contemporary ruling class as the readership of his writings. In writing these books addressed to government officials, Chong must have hoped to awaken the consciousness of the ruling class concerning the nature of their position. Chong envisioned the establishment of a just society by the practice of the *mokmin* spirit on the part of the ruling class.

Conclusion

The *mokmin* spirit that Chong called upon the ruling class in 19th century Korean society reflects the authentic intellectual tradition of the Korean people for correcting economic injustice and political oppression. The idea of *mokmin*, rather than the imported theories of social change or of constitution of society, can suggest the solution in the contemporary Korean context where the suffering of the poor *min* persists. We take this idea of *mokmin* as a hermeneutical tool in perceiving the teachings and practice of the historical Jesus. The *min* whom Chong found in his contemporary society were not to be identified with a certain class, but designated those who became materially poor and destitute, mainly due to the exploitation of the ruling class.

Chapter Two. *Min* in the Bible

Introduction

In proposing the concept of *mokmin* as the hermeneutical starting point in illuminating the life and practice of the historical Jesus, we need to identify the poor and oppressed *min* in the Bible. Can we find the people who may be designated as the poor and oppressed *min* in the Bible? If we succeed in locating them, how does the Bible present the poor and oppressed *min* and what message does it give concerning the *min*? It will be necessary for us to determine the identity of the *min* in the Bible before we confirm the biblical validity of our hermeneutical presupposition. In this regard we first of all need to respond to the minjung theologians who discovered the minjung in the Bible. The Korean minjung theologians identified certain groups of people found in the Bible with the minjung and attempted to establish the biblical basis for their theology. The discovery of minjung in the Bible contributed significantly to the development of minjung theology. In some sense, the various theological reflections presented by the minjung theologians are based on their discovery of minjung in the Bible. Minjung theology in Korea uses the term *ochlos* as a theological concept equivalent to minjung, and adopts the term as the basis within its theological framework. Although the minjung theologians are justified in showing concern for the poor and the oppressed both in the Korean context and in the *Sitz im Leben Jesu*, their use of the term *ochlos* as a theological term seems to be completely arbitrary. Hence it will be our first task to determine the validity of using the term *ochlos* as a theological concept.

I. Discovery of the *Ochlos*-Minjung in the Bible in Minjung Theology

Byung-Mu Ahn emphasised paying attention to the social character of the people surrounding Jesus who are alledged to play decisive role in Jesus' ministry.[1] He argues that there is theological significance in Mark's using the term *ochlos* to designate the people surrounding Jesus, and argues that the *ochlos* are the minjung at the time of

[1] Ahn criticises the practice of form critics who view the editorial sections about the people surrounding Jesus as only the foil for Jesus' ministry, resulting in the exclusion of the people from theological discourse. He also criticises redaction critics for paying little attention to the audience of Jesus, focusing exclusively on the theology of the author as found in his redaction statements and

Jesus.[2] It must be stressed that this term *ochlos* simply refers to a group of people who gathered at a particular place at a particular time regardless of their socio-economic status.[3] However, as Ahn and other minjung theologians take this term as a significant theological concept, we need to examine further whether their position is valid or not.

I.1. Theological Use of *Ochlos* in Mark

Ahn argues that Mark uses the term *ochlos* as a term with theological significance. To support his argument that the term *ochlos* was used as a theological concept, he asserts that Mark's use of the term was intentional in two respects. First, Ahn holds that the way Mark introduces the term *ochlos* shows his intention of drawing our attention to the anonymous crowd.[4] Ahn argues that Mark first draws the reader's attention to the people from the beginning of his Gospel (Mk 1.22) and then informs them that the people are none other than the *ochlos*. Ahn identifies the crowd surrounding Jesus as early as in Mark 1.22. He observes that, at the beginning, "the people" or the third person plural "all" is used to refer to the people (Mk 1.22,30,32,33,44,45; 2.2). According to Ahn, by not stating clearly the identity of the people, though drawing the reader's attention to them, Mark makes his readers become curious about the social composition of the people.[5] It is in Mk 2.4 that Mark finally introduces a term to represent the people, i.e., the *ochlos*.[6] Then Mark reports that Jesus was surrounded by

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arrangements. B. Ahn, "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark," in *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, pp. 138ff.

[2] N. Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," p. 160, points out that the term minjung should be differentiated from the term *ochlos*, for the term minjung has its technical meaning in the area of political theology. He further argues that Mark needed the concept of minjung but had to use *ochlos* instead, because there was no word to express it. *Idem*. But most minjung theologians use the term *ochlos* as synonymous with the term minjung.

[3] The use of the word *ochlos* in Mk. 3.9 will be enough to emphasise this point. It was clearly due to a large number of people that Jesus demanded his disciples to have a boat stand ready. The *ochlos* here simply indicates the people who pressed about Jesus, from whom he wanted to distance himself. Cf. Seyoon Kim, "Is 'Minjung Theology' a Christian Theology?" p. 263, also criticises Ahn for using the word as a theological concept.

[4] N. Suh also makes the same argument. See his, "Who are the Minjung?" in *Essays on Minjung*, p. 548-549.

[5] Ahn, "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark," p.139.

and lived with this *ochlos* all through his life. Secondly, Ahn argues that both the frequency in the use of the word *ochlos* and the preferred use of *ochlos* rather than *laos* show Mark's definite intention in using the term. He observes that the term *ochlos* is used thirty-eight times in the Gospel of Mark, forty-nine times by Matthew, and forty-one times by Luke.[7] In the Gospel of Mark the term *ochlos* is used to refer to 'the people' in lieu of the term *laos* which was usually used in the Septuagint to designate 'the people'. It may normally be expected that the term *laos* rather than *ochlos* would be used to designate the people, since the term *laos* occurs far more frequently in the language of the biblical writers.[8] But, according to Ahn, except in Mk 7.6 which is an OT quotation, and in Mk 14.2 which reports the words of the chief priests and lawyers, *laos* is not used by Mark. Ahn maintains that the term *laos* is the language of the rulers to designate the people of God as defined by the rulers within the national and religious framework, and considers the expression of *presbyteroi tou laou* (Lk. 22:66) as evidence supporting this argument. Ahn emphasises the fact that the use of *ochlos* rather than *laos* is related to the historical situation in the time of Mark when the Jewish people were expelled *en masse* from the territory of Judea. Ahn observes that the term *ochlos* never appears in the Pauline epistles but is used frequently in the other Gospels and Acts, which he assumes as reflecting the influence of Mark. Ahn insists that Mark deliberately used the term *ochlos* for the characterisation of the crowd because he recognised that the characteristics of *ochlos* exactly corresponded to those of the crowd around Jesus.[9] Although Ahn argues that the use of the term *ochlos* in the Gospels, particularly in Mark, is intentional, he seems to have misconstrued the use of the term in the Gospels.

Ahn explains the way Mark introduces the term to support his argument that this term is used as a theological concept. But if we read the biblical data carefully, it will

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[6] Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1966), p. 193, points out that, though Mark indicates the presence of the crowds in 1:5, 33, 45, he uses *ochlos* herefor the first time. However, he does not seem to see any particular theological intention in Mark's using this term.

[7] B. Ahn, "Jesus and People (Minjung)," in R. S. Sugirtharajah (ed.) *Asian Faces of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1993), p. 167.

[8] B. Ahn, "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark," p. 139. Ahn observes that the term *laos* is used around two thousand times in the Septuagint.

present a totally different picture. Ahn ascribes much importance to the fact that Mark introduces the word *ochlos* for the first time in Mk 2.4, but this has nothing to do with Mark's editorial intention of drawing the reader's attention to the people gathered around Jesus.

Ahn argues that Mark mentions the crowd surrounding Jesus in Mk 1.22, 30, 32, 33, 37, 44, 45; 2.2 before *ochlos* appears on the stage. Ahn clearly identifies the people mentioned in the above verses with *ochlos*. If the *ochlos* refer to the people in these verses, as Ahn emphasises, then we should be able to explain the composition of *ochlos* by examining these verses.

The first case where Mark mentions the crowd is Mk 1.22. When Jesus entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and began to teach there, the people who were gathered at the synagogue were amazed at his teaching, for Jesus taught with authority, not like the scribes. Here we notice two things: First, the people in Mk. 1.22 were in the synagogue, which discloses the fact that they were legitimate members of Israel rather than the socially alienated or marginalised people. According to Ahn, the *ochlos*-minjung are described as people who were unable to observe the Sabbath, including the purity laws, because of their jobs. The people in Mk 1.22 thus do not seem to fit into the category of the *ochlos*-minjung. Secondly, connected with the first point, it seems to be significant that the people had a special relationship with the Jewish religious leaders (v. 22b). They were the people who could appreciate the teaching of Jesus and compare it with the teaching of the scribes. It is assumed in this report of Mark that the people knew the teaching of the scribes. Based on these observations, we may say that the people in Mk 1.22 are not those people who belong to the *ochlos*-minjung as Ahn describes them.

The second case is Mk 1.30. Jesus, together with James and John, comes into the house of Simon and Andrew, where Simon's mother-in-law is lying sick with fever, and they speak to Jesus about her. Who were *they*? Seeing that it is referred to in plural, it would be most appropriate to say that they were Jesus disciples. Inside the house of Simon and Andrew, who could have asked Jesus to heal Simon's mother-in-law except Simon, Andrew or the other two disciples? This verse also does not seem to support Ahn's observation.

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[9] B. Ahn, "Jesus and People (Minjung)," p. 169.

According to Ahn, in the immediate context where Mark introduces the term *ochlos* for the first time, Mark refers again to the "many people" who gathered at a house (Mk 2.2). This pericope is important to minjung theologians because, according to them, *ochlos* first appears here. We find that Jesus is teaching the large number of people who were gathered at the house (v.2). The people here recalls Mk 1.[10] The people gathered in Mk 1.33 were the whole body of villagers of Capernaum. They were eager to meet Jesus, bringing to him all the sick and the demon-possessed. The villagers are then to be differentiated from the sick and the demon-possessed whom they brought to Jesus. In the pericope of Mk 2.1-11 they are not said to have brought any sick and demon-possessed people. Moreover, we find some scribes (plural) sitting there in the midst of the *ochlos*. The *ochlos* who were gathered in this scene are constituted mostly of the villagers of Capernaum. The presence of some of the scribes of the Pharisees among the *ochlos* also makes it difficult to identify the *ochlos* with the sick, the poor, the alienated and women. Hence Ahn's description of the composition of the *ochlos* in this case is refuted.

Based on the reading of these passages, it becomes obvious that the argument for Mark's use of the term *ochlos* as a theological concept with a special intention is not supported by the biblical data.

Ahn insists that Mark's intentionality is disclosed in his preferred use of *ochlos* rather than *laos*. This assertion makes sense only if we assume the converse to be possible; that *laos* could have been used in place of *ochlos*.[11] In other words, on this view the terms *ochlos* and *laos* can be used interchangeably and thus Mark could have used either *ochlos* or *laos* to designate the same group of people he had in mind, but chose to use *ochlos* instead. Ahn seems to argue that Mark used *ochlos* instead of *laos* because the term *laos* was the language of the rulers employed to designate the people of God as defined by the rulers within the national and religious framework.[12]

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[10] V. Taylor, *op cit.*, p. 205.

[11] N. Suh, "Speaking on Minjung Theology," (in Korean) p. 179 argues that Luke replaced *ochlos* with *laos* because he despised the *ochlos*. More recently, Ahn acknowledged that there is no basic difference among Matthew, Mark, and Luke in their attitude towards the minjung. Cf. his, "Jesus and People (Minjung)," p. 167.

[12] B. Ahn, "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark," pp. 148-149.

However, this argument does not seem to stand on firm ground. We need to point out that the two terms are not interchangeable. It is more correct to say that the term *laos* is used where it needs to be used and the term *ochlos* is used where it needs to be used. We cannot use *laos* where the term *ochlos* was used, and *ochlos* in lieu of *laos*. The people that *ochlos* designates and the people that *laos* refers to are not identical. So there is no significance in the number of times that each term is used in the biblical writings. It does not seem clear what Ahn means by the language of the rulers, but his definition of the term as designating the people of God in contrast to the political and religious leaders is correct. The *laos* of Israel, whether it was the language of the rulers or not, designates the whole people of Israel who do not belong to the political and religious ruling class. But, according to Ahn, the term *ochlos* designates particular groups among the people of Israel, i.e., the sick, the poor, the socially alienated, and women. It is Ahn himself who defines the two terms differently. It is thus logically incorrect to argue that Mark intentionally chose to use *ochlos*, even when he was able to use *laos*, to designate the people surrounding Jesus.[13] Another piece of evidence that supports our argument that the two terms are not interchangeable is the frequent reference to Jesus' departing from the *ochlos* (Mk 4.36; 6.46; 7.17). It is in Mk 7.31-33 that the *ochlos* is referred to in relation to a particular locality. Jesus met a person who was deaf and spoke with difficulty when he arrived at the sea of Galilee. And Jesus took him aside in private, away from the crowd (*apo tou ochlou*), and healed him (v.33). The *ochlos* here designates merely those who brought the deaf man to Jesus and gathered around him, and Jesus wanted to distance himself and the deaf man from them to be in private. It would have been difficult to say that Jesus departed from the *laos*, because that would mean either that Jesus deserted the people of Israel or that he left Israel for another country. The argument that Mark used the term *ochlos* in preference to the term *laos* is not supported by biblical data. Thus the assertion that Mark used *ochlos* with a definite theological intention must be rejected.

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[13] It must be pointed out that the two terms partly overlap in their use in that *ochlos* can be part of the *laos*, for the four groups of people whom Ahn designate as *ochlos* belong to the people of Israel.

I.2. Composition of the *Ochlos*

Ahn argues that four categories of people compose the *ochlos*: the sick, the tax-collectors and the sinners, the poor, and women.[14] Based on this argument, Ahn equates the *ochlos* with the so-called sinners who stood condemned in their society. Ahn sees the *ochlos* as a social class which has been marginalized and abandoned. These people were the so-called sinners, who stood condemned in their society.[15] However, contrary to Ahn's argument, Mark does not portray the *ochlos* as constituting those people who are condemned by society, but sometimes distinguishes the *ochlos* not only from the disciples and the followers of Jesus but also from the sick, the poor, and the socially condemned. There is no biblical evidence for identifying the *ochlos* with the sick, the socially alienated, the poor, and women. However, to prove the validity of our argument, it may be necessary to analyse several pericopae in the Gospels where the word *ochlos* is used to see whether the *ochlos* constitute the sick, the socially alienated, the poor and women.

Mark 2.13-17

Ahn holds that tax-collectors and sinners concretely reflect the character of the *ochlos*-minjung.[16] He explains that Mk 2.13-17 demonstrates this. Ahn argues that this pericope consists of two parts (vv. 13-14 and vv. 15-17) which were transmitted as separate traditions, and that Mark put these two together. The redactional intention of Mark was to bring to light the significance of Levi's profession in the context of the table fellowship. After drawing our attention to "the whole crowd" (*pas ho ochlos*) in v.13b who followed Jesus and were taught by Jesus, and to the table fellowship with tax-collectors and sinners, Ahn argues that Mark regarded tax-collectors and sinners as part of those who followed Jesus.[17] After noting that the people who were following Jesus in v. 15c are described as the *ochlos* in v. 13, he concludes that the presence of the *ochlos* provides a substantial connection between these two parts, i.e., verses 13-

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[14] B. Ahn, "Jesus and People (Minjung)," pp. 167-170.

[15] B. Ahn, "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark," p. 140.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 143.

14 and 15-17, and indeed provides the overall connection and background for Jesus teaching and ministry.[18] Ahn interprets the fact that tax-collectors and sinners (or prostitutes, Mt 21.31) were referred to side by side as sure evidence confirming that the tax-collectors were specially regarded as members of Jesus' minjung. Thus those socially oppressed and alienated people are included among the *ochlos*-minjung.

This is the only pericope in Mark that Ahn analyses in detail to bring out the social composition of the *ochlos*. In spite of Ahn's attempt to connect the tax-collectors and sinners with "the whole crowd" (v.13b), a closer reading of the pericope will reveal differently. First, it is not clear whether we can see the tax-collectors and the sinners as part of those who were following Jesus. Taylor points out that in the Gospels *akoloutheo* is used technically of disciples.[19] If *ekolouthoun* in v.15c is taken technically as in 2.14, then it means a large group of disciples. If *ekolouthoun* is taken nontechnically carrying the meaning simply to follow, then v.15c shows that the large number of tax-collectors and sinners came to join the meal.[20] In the former case, tax-collectors and sinners, except for Levi who is called personally by Jesus, cannot be counted as part of those who followed Jesus. In the latter case, those who were following Jesus were none other than the tax-collectors and sinners themselves who came to be at the meal. Analysing the phrase in this way, neither case seems to support Ahn's argument that tax-collectors and sinners were part of those who were following Jesus, i.e., of the *pas ho ochlos*. Moreover, the presence of many disciples supports this interpretation. It was not Jesus alone who came to share a meal with the tax-collectors and the sinners. His disciples (plural) were also in the table fellowship with him. The disciples are those who followed Jesus wherever he went. The reason that they joined the table fellowship was because Jesus himself demanded that they follow him (Mk. 1.16-20). It will therefore be most appropriate to interpret v. 15b-c in this way: Not only Jesus but his disciples sat at the table to share the meal with the tax-collectors and the sinners. This was because the tax-collectors and the sinners could not invite Jesus alone without his disciples, for Jesus and his disciples were considered

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[18] *Ibid.*

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26* Word Biblical Commentary, 34a, (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), p. 102.

to be a company. Secondly, the tax-collectors do not fit into the category of *ochlos* as Ahn understands the term. They were not those who were materially poor and politically oppressed. They were able to prepare a dinner[21] for a large number of people (v.15). They were despised by the people for their oppressive and exploitative tax practices. Although Ahn tries to reconcile this self-contradictory observation by arguing that they were poor tax-collectors employed mostly as part-time workers,[22] the critical questioning from the scribes of the Pharisees in v.16 reveals that Jesus' sharing the meal with them, whether they are poor tax-collectors or not, was scandalous. Thirdly, when Jesus went out by the seashore, a large *ochlos* came out to him, and Jesus taught the *ochlos* (v. 13). How can we describe the composition of the *ochlos*? Does the pericope of Mk 2.13-17 show that the tax-collectors and the sinners are the *ochlos* in a paradigmatic way? In the situation where everyone was seeking to meet Jesus (Mk 1.37) and crowded the house where Jesus was staying (Mk 2.1-2), it is correct to argue that all the people who followed Jesus to the seashore were the villagers of Capernaum, including the people who gathered at the house (Mk 2.1-11). This interpretation is supported by the observation that the scribes of the Pharisees, who were in the midst of the *ochlos* when Jesus healed a paralytic, were also present in this pericope to criticise Jesus' behaviour. Their presence on this scene presupposes the fact that they have been following Jesus all the way from the house where they were challenged by Jesus.

Mark 4.1-12

In Mk 4.1-12, we see that the *ochlos* are differentiated not only from the twelve disciples but also from his followers. Jesus began to teach again by the sea when an *ochlos pleistois* gathered to him (v.1). Jesus taught the *ochlos* in parables. As soon as Jesus was alone, his followers along with the twelve disciples asked the meaning of the parable. Jesus' response is allusive: "To you has been given the secret of the Kingdom of God, but for those outside (*ekeinois tois exo*), everything comes in parables" (v.11).

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[21] Morna Hooker, *The Gospel according to Mark* (London: A & C Black, 1991), p. 95, maintains that this was a feast, not just an ordinary meal. She also sees a link between this pericope and 2:19f where Jesus gives a parable of a wedding feast.

[22] B. Ahn, "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark," p. 145.

New Testament scholars have presented different interpretations of *ekeinois tois exo*. (1) D. Nineham argues that the phrase refers to non-Christians in general.[23] J. Gnilka argues that the outsiders referred to in 4.11 are the Jews, the 'old Israel' who rejected their messiah.[24] (2) H.-J.Klauck argues that the outsiders are, if interpreted within the whole context of the Gospel of Mark, the Jewish authorities so negatively portrayed during the time of Jesus.[25] (3) J. Coutts holds that *ekeinois tou exo* correspond to the mother and brothers of Jesus standing 'outside' in 3.31, and 'his followers, along with the twelve' (4.10) are 'those who were sitting around Jesus' in 3.34.[26] He argues that 4.10-12 naturally follows 3.35, because the disciples' request for an explanation of 'the parables' (4.10) does not refer to the sower, but to the parables in 3.23-30.[27] Coutts further argues that the parable of the sower (4.1-9) and its interpretation (4.14-20) are displaced, and 4.12 should be connected with 4.21-32. He maintains that 4.21-32 form an orderly comment on the phrase 'To you has been given the secret of the Kingdom of God'.[28] (4) Michael D. Goulder attempts to combine (2) and (3), and argues that those outsiders are the family of Jesus who constitute the leaders of the Jerusalem Church.[29]

However, all these interpretations of 'those outsiders' are not satisfactory. First, this phrase, which outside the synoptics is exclusively Pauline (1 Cor 5.12-13; 1 Thess 4.12; Col 4.5), always refers to non-Christians, so it is not likely that Mark attributed this way of thinking to the historical Jesus.[30] Secondly, though it may be true that Mark portrays the Jewish authorities in a negative way, as Klauck argues, the immediate context does not show any evidence to support this attitude. Klauck himself

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[23] D. Nineham, *Saint Mark* (Harmonsworth: Penguin, 1963), p. 135.

[24] J. Gnilka, *Die Verstockung Israels* (Munich: Kosel, 1961), p. 85.

[25] H.-J. Klauck, *Allegorie und Allegorese in synoptischen Gleichnistexten* (Munster: Aschendorf, 1978), pp. 248-249.

[26] J.Coutts, "'Those Outside' (Mark 4,10-12)," *Studia Evangelica* II, (Berlin: Akademie, 1964), p. 155.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Michael D. Goulder, "Those Outside (Mk. 4:10-12)," *NT* XXXIII, 4 (1991), pp. 289-302.

[30] Goulder, *ibid.*, p. 291.

acknowledges that within the narrative itself the *ekeinois* in v.11 designates the crowd of vv.1-2.[31] Thirdly, the redactor's intention in inserting vv.10-12, if it is an insertion, should be ascribed due respect. M.A. Beavis points out that Coutts cannot explain why Mark inserted the parable of the sower and its interpretation into this context.[32] The redactional intention of Mark should be respected. Even though we admit the argument that vv.10-12 should be connected with Mk 3.35 and be followed by Mk 4.21ff, the interpretation of "those outsiders" as Jesus' mother and brothers seems to be arbitrary. Mk 4.11 specifies those who are outside as people to who "everything comes in parables", but we cannot find any hint that Jesus' mother and brothers were part of the audience of the parable. They were outside the house while Jesus was inside speaking in parables (Mk 3.23) and conversing with the scribes and the crowd around him, who were the actual audience of Jesus' teaching in parables. Any argument to connect 'those outsiders' with Jesus' mother and brothers, based on the superficial observation about the use of *exo*, tends to distort the narrative itself. That Jesus' teaching was not addressed to his mother and brothers is evident. This argument is not supported by Mk 4.2,33-34 where Jesus taught the *ochlos* in parables.

Goulder is right in explaining the use of *ekeinois* (v.11) as demonstrative.[33] However, because he assumes that Jesus stayed in the boat all along to Mk 4.36, he finds the expression of *tois exo* very curious.[34] He then attempts to re-structure the narrative itself and identify the people designated by *ekeinois* as Jesus' mother and brothers in an arbitrary way. But we have to read and interpret the narrative according to Mark's editorial intention in its final form. The most plausible interpretation of *ekeinois tois exo* will be to view the *ekeinois* as designating the *ochlos* in Mk 4.1. The location of Jesus' private interpretation (4.10) is not clear.[35] The phrase *kata monas*

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[31] Klauck, *op cit.*, p. 248.

[32] Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark's Audience. The Literary and Social Setting of Mark 4.11-12* JSNT Sup. 33(Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), p. 72.

[33] Goulder, *ibid.*, p. 291.

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] Taylor, *ibid.*, p. 205, holds that the location for this conversation was either in a house or on the road. If the location of this private explanation can be specified, the identity of 'those who are outside' will be easily determined. But this is hypothetical with no textual evidence. We see that even in the parallel stories in Mt. 13:10-13 and Lk. 8:9-10, the location of the private explanation is not specified.

(alone) means that, regardless of the location, Jesus is away from the *ochlos pleistos* ('a very great multitude', v.1) so as to be able to have a private dialogue with a small group of people. Although it is not possible to decide whether this interpretation in private occured after the dismissal of the *ochlos* at the end of Jesus' teaching or during the temporary interval between his teachings, it seems obvious that by *ekeinois tois exo* Jesus refers to the *ochlos* in vv.1-2. In the parallel narrative in Mt 13.1-13, the distinction between the *ochlos* and Jesus' disciples is less ambiguous. Matthew also uses the term *ochlos* to designate the gathered people (v.2). Jesus spoke to the *ochloi polloi* (great multitudes) in parables (vv.3-9). In v.10 a different scene is reported, in which the disciples ask Jesus to explain the meaning of the parable: "Why do you speak *to them* in parables?" (v.10). Jesus responds: "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but *to them* (*ekeinois)* it has not been granted" (v.11). In this pericope it is obvious that *ekeinois* are the *pas ho ochlos* standing on the beach in v.2 as the audience of Jesus. Jesus further answers that "because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand" (v.13).

This argument is strongly supported by the practice of Jesus, who repeatedly gave private explanations to his disciples (Mk 4.33-34; 7.14-15,17-23; 9.11-13, 28-29; 10.1-12; 13.3-37).[36] In particular, Mark reports in several places (4.33-34; 7.17-18; 10.1-12) that Jesus' teaching to the *ochlos* in public and to his disciples in private are clearly differentiated. In Mk 7.17 the disciples ask the meaning of the parable when Jesus entered the house after leaving the *ochlos*. In Mk10.10, it reported simply "in the house" that the disciples request Jesus to explain the parable, but it is obvious that it was after Jesus taught the *ochloi* according to his custom (v.1).

J. Behm defines *hoi exo* as meaning "the broad mass of the people not amongst the disciples."[37] If we take 'the disciples' in Behm's definition to include the unidentified followers of Jesus, the *ekeinois tois exo*, i.e., the *ochlos* consists of Jewish people

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[36] D. Daube, *the New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, p. 143, shows that Jesus' private teachings in Mark follow a pattern similar to rabbinic practices that differentiate between 'public retort and private explanation.' For the discussion on the nature of Jesus' private teachings, see M.A. Beavis, *Mark's Audience* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989).

[37] J. Behm, "εξω," *TDNT II* p. 576.

distinguished from Jesus' followers and the twelve disciples, who are not allowed to know, thus alienated from, the mystery of the Kingdom of God.

Mark 6.34-37

This pericope records Jesus feeding five thousand people in a miraculous way. Here Jesus describes the great crowd (*polyn ochlon*) who followed him as sheep without a shepherd, revealing the way he perceived the people and the contemporary leaders.[38] But it is in the dialogue between Jesus and his disciples concerning the matter of feeding them that the perception of the *ochlos* on the part of the disciples is revealed. It was Jesus' disciples who reminded Jesus of the meal time: "This is a lonely place, and the hour is now late; send them away, to go into the country and villages round about and buy themselves something to eat" (vv. 35b-36). This remark shows that Jesus' disciples considered the crowd as people having enough resources to buy their meal for themselves. When Jesus told them to give the crowd something to eat, the disciples responded: "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?" (v. 37). Again this reply of Jesus' disciples reveal their financial situation. They did not say that they lacked enough money to buy such a large amount of bread. This alludes to the fact that, though they may have money, it would be unreasonable for them to *go and buy* so much bread for the crowd. What Jesus' disciples were recommending was to scatter the crowd to buy food for themselves. The *ochlos* as Jesus' disciples understood them in this scene are not pictured as those who did not have resources to meet their hunger.

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[38] B. Ahn makes a contradictory observation concerning the identity of the sheep without a shepherd. In his article, "The Subjects of History in Mark," (in Korean) in *Minjung and Korean Thelogy*, p. 153, Ahn asserts that the great crowd who were described as 'the sheep without a shepherd' designates the destiny of Israel in the historical situation of Mark after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. However, in another article (which appeared originally in the same volume with the above article), "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark," p. 141, he notes the two traditions behind the phrase: Either it is a criticism of the rulers, who had the responsibility to take care of the people (cf. Ezek 34.5) or it is a criticism against the crowd who were cursed with directionlessness because of their betrayal of Yahweh. As he rejects the latter tradition as background for this remark, it refers to the unjust situation in which the people are oppressed and exploited by their own rulers rather than the historical situation in Mark's time when the people were expelled from their land and on their way to exile. If the phrase has relevance to Mark's historical situation, it would be strange for Mark to use the expression to describe the situation of the historical Jesus.

Mark 10.46-52

Another instance in which the *ochlos* and the sick people are dramatically contrasted is given in Mk 10.46-52. In this pericope, Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and *ochlou hikanou*. Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, is sitting by the roadside. Hearing that it is Jesus of Nazareth, he begins to cry out for help. And many rebuke him, telling him to be quiet. In this scene, it is the people in the *ochlos* who rebuke the blind beggar crying for help. Because Bartimaeus is blind, it may have been difficult for him to judge the distance between himself and Jesus. Realising this to be a life-time chance for him to be liberated from his suffering, he may have shouted as loud as possible to be heard by Jesus. Seeing that the *ochlos* is trying to silence the beggar, the desperate noise that he makes seems to be especially loud. The *ochlos* became the oppressor blocking the beggar's way to Jesus.

Mark 12.41-42

Another passage that helps us draw a clear picture of the composition of the *ochlos* is Mk 12.41-42. This episode takes place in the temple. Jesus is sitting in the temple opposite the treasury watching the *ochlos* putting money into it. The first group of people among the *ochlos* who come forward and put money into the treasury are many rich people (v. 41). They put in large sums. Then comes a poor widow with a penny (v. 42). This pericope makes it clear that the *ochlos* includes many rich people *and* the poor widow. As is obvious from these observations, the *ochlos* mentioned in Mark so far are not the poor and oppressed people, the socially despised people, or the marginalized people.

Mark 14.43-52

Mk 14.43-50 reports the role of the *ochlos* in arresting Jesus. When Jesus was speaking with his disciples after his prayer at Gethsemane, Judas, one of his twelve disciples, came with an *ochlos* who carried swords and clubs. They were people sent from the chief priests, the scribes and the elders. The composition of the *ochlos* is not clear. The only important hint is that one of the *ochlos* is a slave of the high priest. Considering the fact that the *ochlos* were dispatched by the high priests, the scribes, and the elders, together with the fact that it was a delicate time when these religious leaders tried to avoid any possible rioting by the people, those who were sent to arrest

Jesus must have been those close to those religious leaders. This *ochlos* must therefore have been those in special relationship with the chief priests, the scribes and the elders. From the fact that they are referred to in plural, it is possible to conjecture that this *ochlos* was composed of people selected from each household of the rulers. Jesus said to them: "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me, as against a robber? Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me" (48-49a, NRSV). This statement exposes the premeditated conspiracy on the part of the high priests, the scribes, and the elders. The agents who were mobilised to arrest Jesus were none other than the *ochlos*.

Mark 15.8-15

Mk 15:8 records that the *ochlos went up* to Pilate and *asked* to release one prisoner as he had been accustomed to do for them at the feast. This clearly shows that Pilate had regarded the *ochlos* as important partner in maintaining political stability. Here the *ochlos* are moving actively to demand their rights. It is not purely conjectural to suggest that the arrest of Barabbas was by the Roman soldiers, because the Jews would not have handed over the person who fought for their independence. Pilate seems to have collected information about Jesus, for he knew that the high priests had delivered up Jesus because of envy (v.10). Pilate follows the demand of the *ochlos* and releases Barabbas. The fact that this sort of deal between the colonial government and the *ochlos* was repeated during every feast signifies that the *ochlos* had not been considered as a group that could be ignored. This *ochlos* already existed in Jerusalem with a significant political role to play before Jesus entered the stage. Thus, it is obvious that the *ochlos* are not the poor, the sick, the alienated, and women who were marginalized and oppressed within the Jewish society. They were not *Wanderochlos* who followed Jesus, the *Wanderprediger*.[39]

I.3 Summary

The word *ochlos* is not a theological concept designating a social class involving the poor, the sick, the alienated, and women who are condemned by society. It is not used with theological intention, but simply to refer to a group of people gathered at a

particular place at a particular time (Mk. 3:9). According to our reading of those passages in Mark where the term was used, *ochlos* cannot be identified with those groups of people whom Ahn argues to constitute the *ochlos*-minjung. The majority of the people that constituted the *ochlos* were legitimate members of Israel. Thus we may conclude that there is no biblical evidence to identify the *ochlos* surrounding Jesus during his ministry with the sick, the socially despised, the poor, and women.[40]

II. The Poor and Oppressed *Min* in *Sitz im Leben Jesu*

Minjung theologians find minjung in the Bible.[41] They maintain that the crowd, i.e., the *ochlos*, who surrounded and followed Jesus during his earthly ministry are the minjung at the time of Jesus.[42] As minjung theologians prefer to describe the minjung in concrete historical situations, they identify the minjung in the historical situations in the time of Jesus. Byung-Mu Ahn finds minjung in the Gospels and identifies it with the sick, the tax-collectors and sinners, the poor and women. Nam-Dong Suh shows a similar perception of minjung in the Gospels by arguing that "at the time of Jesus, the minjung are the disabled, the sick, women, orphans, prostitute, aliens, i.e., those who belonged to the lowest class of the society."[43]

The first group of people whom Ahn identifies with the minjung are the sick. According to the redactional order of Mark, there are many healing stories in the Gospel of Mark from the beginning (1.21ff.). Ahn asserts that, in the healing stories, Mark shows that the sick persons held an important position among the *ochlos* of

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[39] *Contra* Ahn, "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark," p. 141.

[40] Ahn, "Jesus and People (Minjung)," p. 167, argues: "It is, therefore, evident that Mark deliberately used the term *ochlos* for the characterisation of the crowd who gathered around Jesus, because he recognised that the characteristics of *ochlos* exactly corresponded to those of the crowd around Jesus." The term "crowd" is used twice in this statement to refer to the people gathered around Jesus. If we try to translate "the crowd" into Greek, what Greek term would Ahn use other than *ochlos*?

[41] Although Minjung theologians find minjung in the Old Testament, we will limit our discussion on the minjung in the Gospels. For the identity of the minjung in the Old Testament, see C. H. S. Moon, *A Korean Minjung Theology: An Old Testament Perspective* (New York: Orbis, 1985); Jeong-Joon Kim, "The Old Testament Basis for Minjung Theology," (in Korean) in *Minjung and Korean Theology*, pp. 29-57.

[42] Cf. N. Suh, "Who are the Minjung?" (in Korean) in *Essays on Minjung*, p. 545. He simply assumes that the *ochlos* are the minjung by saying that "the crowd, i.e., the minjung (*ochlos*) followed Jesus wherever he went."

[43] N. Suh, "Speaking on Minjung Theology," (in Korean) in *Studies on Minjung Theology*, p. 177.

Jesus.[44] The second group of people identified as the minjung are tax-collectors and sinners. Ahn holds that tax-collectors and sinners are the ones who concretely reflect the character of the minjung, for they represent the socially alienated people.[45] The third group are the poor in the material sense of the word. Ahn argues that we can never think of Jesus without taking into consideration the ethos of poverty, though it is not clear what he means by ethos of poverty.[46] The fourth group identified as the minjung are women. Ahn observes that women appear in the Gospels not only as patients or poor persons, but as those who observed Jesus' passion and became eyewitnesses to the empty tomb. According to Ahn, this fact tells us something about the importance of women's position among the minjung who followed Jesus.[47]

Given the definition of minjung in the historical context of Korea, is it valid to designate the poor, the tax-collectors and sinners, the sick and women as the minjung during the time of Jesus? Let us examine each group in some detail.

II.1 The Poor

The Gospel writers report that during his earthly ministry, Jesus showed his concern for the poor in various ways. In this respect, minjung theologians are right in maintaining that Jesus' ministry can be characterised as the ministry for the poor.[48] The biblical evidence for this observation are as follows: i) Jesus linked the kingdom of God with the poor (Lk 6.20. cf. Mt 5.3); ii) In describing his mission, Jesus announced that the good news is preached to the poor (Mk 11.5/ Lk 7.22; Lk 4.18); iii) Jesus demanded the rich young ruler, who asked Jesus the way to eternal life, to sell his possessions and give the money to the poor (Mk 10.21/ Mt 19.21/ Lk 18.22); iv) In the parable of the great dinner, Jesus said that it is the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame who are invited to the feast in the Kingdom of God, while the rich people who have land and oxen refuse the invitation and are thus excluded (Lk 14.15-24/ Mt

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[44] B. Ahn, "Jesus and People (Minjung)," p. 169.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] N. Suh, "Life of the World and Christ," (in Korean) in *Studies on Minjung Theology*, p. 356.

22.1-14); v) Jesus contrasts the poor man Lazarus with the rich man, and announces that the rich man is sent to Hades after death, whereas Lazarus is entertained by Abraham (Lk 16.19-31); vi) While Jesus was at table in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came in and poured valuable ointment on Jesus' head. The disciples became enraged with the woman's waste of the valuable ointment, saying that the money should be used to help the poor. At this Jesus told his disciples not to trouble the woman and said to them that the poor are always with them (Mk 14.3-9/ Mt 26.6-13/ Jn 12.1-8); vii) When Jesus told Judas to do what he was up to, his disciples suspected that almsgiving to the poor was ordered by Jesus. According to these biblical data, it seems obvious that the poor designate those who are materially poor,[49] and in most cases the poor are also the sick.

In the New Testament, the Greek word most frequently used to describe the poor is *ptochos,* which is used thirty-four times.[50] The word used to refer to the poor mostly in the Greek sources was *penes* and it was used only once in the New Testament at 2 Cor 9.9. Those people who were described as *penes* were those relatively poor.[51] The poor who are referred to as *ptochoi* are those who have to beg and thus relied on the alms-giving of other people. Thus it will not be incorrect to equate *ptochoi* with beggars.[52] The concrete examples that show the life of the poor are the beggar Lazarus (Lk 16.19-31) and the blind beggar Bartimaeus (Mk 11.15-19 pars.). There is no difficulty in identifying the poor in the Bible as the *min* during the time of Jesus.

II.2. The Sick

During his lifetime, the healing of the sick was the most prominent aspect of Jesus' ministry.[53] Jesus himself characterised his mission in terms of healing the sick and

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[49] Although Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 113, suggests a rather ambiguous description of the poor by saying that Jesus used "the poor" in the wider sense designating "those who are oppressed in quite a general sense: the oppressed who cannot defend themselves, the desperate, the hopeless," it may be safer to assume that the poor in the Gospels refer to those who have no economic power to survive and thus have to rely on others' alms-giving.

[50] N. Suh, "Sociology of Poverty and Theology of the Poor," (in Korean) in *Studies on Minjung Theology*, p. 398.

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] *Ibid.*

preaching the Gospel. In his answer to John's question, Jesus described the nature of his mission as healing the sick and preaching the gospel (Mt 11.4-5). Also, in the announcement of his mission at Nazareth (Lk 4.18-19), Jesus made it clear that healing is the major part of his mission. However, were the sick the poor and oppressed *min* during the time of Jesus?

Ahn considers sick people as the minjung for three reasons. First, the sick people appear alone in most cases (Mk 1.23, 40; 5.2, 25; 10.46). Ahn conjectures that those sick people were alienated from their family or their community. He refers to the sick man at the pool of Bethzatha who had no one to put him into the pool when the water was stirred up (Jn 5.1-9). This sick man, according to Ahn, is just an example of those people who were abandoned by their family and community because of their sickness.[54] Secondly, Ahn argues that most of the sick people reported in the Gospels were socially condemned and there were only a few people who suffered from common diseases.[55] Ahn notes that diseases such as leprosy (Mk 1.40), demon-possession (Mk 1.23; 5.2; 7.26; 9.17), haemorrhage (Mk 5.25), blindness (Mk 7.22; 10.36), and dumbness (Mk 7.2) were all socially alienating. And those who were found with one of these diseases were not only excluded from the privileges and duties associated with being members of the community but were considered outcasts of the society.[56] Thus they could not escape poverty. Thirdly, Ahn observes that, among the sick who were cured by Jesus, there was no one who belonged to the rich and the powerful.[57]

Although it is true that people with certain diseases were excluded from Jewish society, it is wrong to assume that all the sick were socially alienated. It is obvious that lepers were ostracised from their family and society. However, Ahn's argument is difficult to support, for it is doubtful whether all the sick people were abandoned by their family and community. We can find many cases which confirm the fact that the sick were not abandoned by their family or society. i) The first healing ministry of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of Mark is the healing of the man with an unclean spirit (Mk

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[53] B. Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee* (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 1993), p. 132.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] *Ibid.*

[57] *Ibid.*

1.21-28). Here we need to pay attention to the fact that the healing event took place in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Mk 1.21). The fact that the man attended the synagogue on the Sabbath at least suggests that he was not expelled from the community and he was with other people in the synagogue.[58] ii) Mark reports that, when Jesus was staying in the house of Simon and Andrew, the people of Capernaum brought to Jesus all who were sick or possessed with demons (Mk 1.32). Those who were sick or demon-possessed did not come to Jesus alone, but were brought to Jesus by other people, most probably their family members. If this is so, it shows that the sick and the demon-possessed were not alienated from the community or at least from their families.[59] iii) Similarly, we find that the paralysed man did not approach Jesus alone, but was carried on a pallet by four people (Mk 2.1-11). The relationship of the four people with the paralysed man is not clearly stated, but, seeing that they made a desperate attempt to bring the patient to Jesus by any means, we may assume that they were close to the patient. Jesus' instruction to the paralytic to go back to his home does not indicate the end of his alienation from his family, for he seems to have been brought to Jesus from his home. iv) There seems to be no evidence to suggest that the woman who had suffered from haemorrhaging was abandoned by her family or by the society. It does not seem possible, based on the information given in Mark, to say whether she was abandoned by her family. However, Mark makes it clear that for twelve years she was seeking treatment from many physicians, spending all her money. There is thus no ground to conceive that she was alienated by the community, for she had to be in the community to seek treatment. v) When Jesus went to the region of Decapolis, the people brought a deaf man with a speech impediment to Jesus and

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[58] We can find a similar case in the healing of the man with a withered hand. Jesus healed the man in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Mk 3.1-6).

[59] *Contra* Martyn Percy, "Christ the Healer: Modern healing Movements and the Imperative of Praxis for the Poor," *Studies in World Christianity* Volume 1 Part 2 (1996), p. 118, who argues that in virtually every healing story in the Gospels the sick are "politically, socially or religiously disadvantaged, unloved or unnoticed by the majority of onlookers or witnesses," and they were "marginalised, dispossessed, cast-out and cursed in society and from faith communities." However, it must be pointed out that it was not *in virtually every healing story* that the sick were alienated and outcast from the communities. Although we can admit that, among those who were healed by Jesus, a majority of them were socially and religiously segregated from the society, we also find other cases that defy that argument. If it was *the people of Capernaum* who brought *all* who were sick or demon-possessed, it is obvious that the sick and the demon-possessed who were brought to Jesus by the people of Capernaum were not outcast or alienated from their communities in Capernaum.

begged Jesus to cure him (Mk 7.31-32). vi) Again it was "some people" in Bethsaida who brought a blind man to Jesus and begged him to touch him (Mk 8.22).

Nevertheless, the observation that the sick people who are reported in the Gospels are mostly poor and destitute is quite valid.[60] We find in many cases that sickness and poverty go together. In the case of the woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years (Mk 5.24-34 pars.), the illness caused her poverty. Mark reports that she had endured much under many physicians and had spent all that she had (Mk 5.26). It is not clear why she had endured much under many physicians, but it seems certain that she sold all her possessions to pay for the treatment of her disease. The fact that she spent *all that she had* indicates that she did not have any more money left to spend for the treatment of her chronic disease. Although she may have had a substantial sum of money, her disease eventually caused her to fall into poverty. In the cases of the lepers, the blind beggar Bartimaeus, and Lazarus, we find that sickness and poverty are also closely related. What this implies is that it is not easy simply to designate the sick as the minjung during the time of Jesus. At the same time, it must be admitted that most of the sick in the Gospels were amongst the poor *min* during the time of Jesus.

III.3. Women

Ahn includes women among the minjung by observing that women appear in the Gospels here and there as patients or poor persons.[61] Ahn also argues that women were typically minjung in that they had to suffer under the patriarchal system.[62] We may refer to Yong-Bock Kim who found the minjung status of women in their subjugation under male political domination: "Women belong to minjung when they are politically dominated by men."[63] It is not clear what he means by 'political domination of men over women'. He may be thinking of the patriarchal society where women are dominated by the male members. If this is so, it will cause difficulty in describing accurately the minjung status of women, for the minjung status of women is

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[60] B. Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 156.

[61] B. Ahn, "Jesus and People (Minjung)," p. 168.

[62] B. Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, pp. 172-200.

connected simply with the cultural subjugation of women under the patriarchal system. What complicates the difficulty of perceiving women in general as minjung on the basis of so-called political domination is that it is not easy to decide the scope of the domination. Do we have to consider all women within such society as minjung? Can we refer to those women who belong to the high class of society as minjung?[64] These questions will remind us of the danger of generalising about the minjung status of women in general in Palestine society. So it seems necessary to examine the biblical passages in which women appear in connection with Jesus. Here it is our concern to identify the economic situation of the women to determine whether they can be designated as the poor and exploited *min* in *Sitz im Leben Jesu*.[65]

The list of women is as follows: i) Simon's mother-in-law (Mk 1.29-31 pars). When Jesus and some of his disciples went to Simon's house, Jesus healed Simon's mother-in-law who was suffering from fever. After being cured, she served them. In this brief episode, we notice that Simon's mother-in-law was living in Simon's house where they were able to entertain guests with food, which indicates that she was not materially poor. ii) The haemorrhaging woman (Mk 5.25-34 pars.). The Gospel writers report that the haemorrhaging woman had spent "all that she had" to receive treatment for her disease. As we have discussed above, the woman, though initially she may have had substantial possessions, was reduced to poverty. iii) The Syrophoenician woman (Mt 15.21-28/ Mk 7.24-30). When Jesus went into the region of Tyre, he was encountered a Gentile woman who asked him to heal her demon-possessed daughter. We are not given any specific information about her to determine her economic situation. The only hint is that, according to the Gospel of Mark, she owned a house. iv) A poor widow who put two small copper coins into the treasury (Mk 12.41-44/ Lk 21.1-4). While Jesus was sitting opposite the treasury in the temple, he compared the

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[63] Y. Kim, "Messiah and Minjung," p. 185.

[64] In Amos, the rich women who oppress the poor and crush the needy (4.1) are contrasted with the pregnant woman who is killed by the Ammonite soldiers. Cf. Cyris H. S. Moon, "My People in Micah," (in Korean) in *Minjung and Korean Theology*, pp. 123-124.

[65] We do not deny that Jesus showed particular concern for women who were discriminated in the patriarchal system in Palestine and he actually associated with the women from various social classes. What we reject here is the generalisation that all women were minjung, i.e., the poor *min*. Women do not fit into the category of minjung as the minjung theologians define the term. The issues relating Jesus to women must be approached from a different perspective, which is beyond the scope of the present study.

offering of a rich man with that of a poor widow. What she put into the temple treasury was "two small copper coins (*letron*), which are worth a penny" (Mk 12.42). Jesus told his disciples that the two coins were all her possessions. v) The woman who anointed Jesus with very costly ointment of nard at Bethany (Mk 14.3-9/ Mt 26.6-13/ Jn 12.1-8). While Jesus was enjoying table fellowship in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came in with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard and poured its contents on Jesus' head. Some among the people gathered for the occasion calculated that the ointment cost more than three hundred denarii and they rebuked her for wasting the expensive ointment instead of giving the money to the poor. In the episode of feeding the five thousand (Mk 6.30-44), Jesus' disciples told him that they need two hundred denarii to buy food for the people, the number of whom would exceed five thousand if women and children were included. We may observe two facts which disclose her economic situation. First, the fact that the woman owned such a jar of costly ointment indicates that she was not poor. Secondly, the angry reaction of those who criticised her for not using the money for the poor clearly shows that they did not perceive the woman as a *poor min*.[66] vi) Mary and Martha (Lk 10.38-42). Jesus visits Mary and Martha's house, where he was welcomed as a guest.[67] Mary was listening to Jesus' teaching in the house, while Martha was preoccupied with the details of serving the meal.[68] We also note that the women owned a house and were able to invite and entertain their guests. Based on this observation, we can say that Mary and Martha

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[66] Ahn suggests a highly speculative interpretation on the significance of the woman's behaviour: "We need to pay attention to the fact that the protagonist of the story that announces the passion of Jesus was a woman. . . She must have been aware of the death of Jesus. Or rather she seems to have concluded that Jesus must die. . . She had the penetrating perception concerning Jesus' death." See his *Jesus of Galilee*, pp. 194-195. However, there is no hint given in the pericope that will enable us to conjecture the woman's foreknowledge of Jesus' death. Jesus' interpretation of the woman's behaviour as the preparation of his burial cannot be taken as an evidence for the woman's awareness of Jesus' death, for even Jesus' disciples who were instructed about Jesus' death could not connect the woman's behaviour with Jesus' death. Moreover, Ahn does not pay attention to the fact that the woman was rich enough to possess a very expensive ointment that cost more than three hundred denarii.

[67] J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke (X-XXIV)*, vol. 2. The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1985), p. 893.

[68] Fitzmyer, *ibid*, p. 893, does not hold that Jesus was already reclining at the table. He suggests that the meal is only being prepared. However, the word "serving" (*diakonein*) should be taken to mean the actual serving at table. 1) Jesus used the word diakonein to refer to the actual table service in Lk 22.27. 2) It is hard to imagine that Mary and Martha were working out "elaborate plans of providing for Jesus' meal" in the situation that a number of guests were already in their house. Cf. E. E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke*, New Century Bible (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), p. 162.

were not materially poor people. vii) Some women who accompanied Jesus (Lk 8.3; cf. Mk 15.40-41). According to the Gospel of Mark, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, Salome, and many other women had come up to Jerusalem with Jesus (Mk 15.40-41). Luke 8.3 reports that even during his ministry, Jesus was accompanied by some women who provided for him and his disciples out of their resources.[69] It is noteworthy that among the women was Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, whose social status cannot be said to be minjung. The women were not materially poor, but, on the contrary, provided material support for Jesus and his disciples. viii) Elizabeth (Lk 1.5). Luke reports that she was a descendant of Aaron and was the wife of a priest named Zechariah. She was not a so-called "sinner" in society, but both she and her husband are described as "righteous" before God. ix) Anna (Lk 2.36). She was a prophet. According to Luke's report, she became a widow seven years after her marriage and "never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day" (v. 37). And finally, if we may include those who were outside the Jesus movement in the list, we can refer to Herodias (Mk 6.17 pars.) and Pilate's wife (Mt 27.19). Herodias was once Philip's wife, but after his death became the wife of King Herod. These two women, who belonged to the highest social class of that time, cannot be perceived as minjung simply on the basis of their gender.

Drawing on our brief survey of women reported in the Gospels, we may conclude that, though it is absolutely true that the women who were poor and sick should be included among poor *min*, it is hardly possible to argue for the minjung status of women in general on the basis of their gender.

II.4. Tax-Collectors and Sinners

Tax-Collectors

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[69] B. Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 184, asserts that the "service" of the women indicates their status as Jesus' disciples. According to Ahn, the "service" means the social service that Jesus' disciples rendered in Acts 6, so the women who followed Jesus actually got involved in the mission to preach the Gospel. *Idem*. However, it seems to be misreading the text to connect the women's "service" with social involvement. First, the women served Jesus and his disciples with their possessions. The "service" should be taken to mean the table service, as what the disciples gave in Acts 6. Secondly, it was Jesus and his disciples whom the women served, not the general public. In this sense, it does not make sense to describe their "service" as social service.

Minjung theologians argue that tax-collectors and sinners represent the minjung during the time of Jesus. Although minjung theologians perceive the tax-collectors as representing the minjung at the time of Jesus and take Jesus' association with them as the biblical basis of minjung theology, they seem unaware of the fact that this argument actually serves to expose the fallacy of their argument.

If minjung is understood, in the broad political sense, to designate either the ruled in contrast to the rulers, as Nam-Dong Suh maintains, or an ethnic group politically dominated by another group, as Kim Yong-Bock defines it, the minjung at the time of Jesus should be the whole Israelite people regardless of their socio-economic situation, for Israel was dominated under the colonial rule of the Roman Empire. Just as the March First Declaration of Independence, which the Korean religious leaders proclaimed in 1919, used the expression 'twenty million Korean minjung' to refer to the whole Korean people suffering under Japanese colonial rule, the whole Israelite people may be described as the Israelite minjung in the same way. And, except for the small number of people who sided with the colonial government, despised by their fellows as betrayers of the nation, the whole population of Israel, regardless of their status within the society, should be classified as minjung.

If minjung is to be described, in the restricted political sense, as those who participated in the struggle against colonial domination, as Nam-Dong Suh argues, we will have to pay attention to the nationalist-liberationist Zealot movement that revolted against the Roman colonial rule. Those who therefore participated in the Zealot movement to achieve the national sovereignty of Israel and to liberate the people of Israel from the domination of Roman colonial power must be identified as minjung at the time of Jesus. In connection with this, the argument of minjung theologians to present the tax collectors as the representative of the minjung must be rejected. In the colonial situation of Israel, the tax collectors were powerful exploiters and oppressors of the people. They were despised not only by the Jewish religious leaders but also by the people. Ahn himself acknowledges the difficulty of including the tax collectors among the minjung. He admits that the tax collectors were agents of the Roman empire and cannot be characterised as the poor class.[70] He also explains the general animosity against the tax collectors by referring to the anti-Roman revolt of the people which

began from the refusal to pay taxes.[71] Although he further explains that there were thepoor even among the tax collectors, this seems to be a desperate attempt to include them among the minjung. According to Ahn, there were poor tax collectors who worked as part-time employees and that the tax collectors who exploited the people were those who received contracts from the Roman Empire.[72] Ahn asserts that there were people who were employed by those tax collectors as part-time workers. Although he does not say explicitly that these part-time employees were poor, he clearly indicates that those tax collectors whom Jesus associated with were from among the poorer ones. However, as Jeremias well demonstrates, though we may distinguish between the rich toll farmers and their sub-tenants, it was the sub-tenants who exploited the people to maximise their tax income for a fixed period, thus being particularly hated by the people.[73] Ahn himself admits that those employed as part-time tax collectors were also treated as tax collectors and were alienated from society, which allows the perception that they were no different from the rich tax collectors.[74] Thus, it becomes obvious that tax collectors cannot be included among the minjung.

Why then does Ahn attempt to include the tax-collectors among the minjung, even when he has to admit that tax collectors are not among those who are politically oppressed and materially poor? The problem originates in his taking the term *ochlos* as a theological concept. He asks: "Why did Mark include the tax-collectors in the category of *ochlos*?"[75] Ahn's mistake is to equate the *ochlos* with the minjung at the time of Jesus, and the question raised by Ahn is completely misdirected.

Sinners

In minjung theology, all the people who were religiously defined in Jewish society as "sinners" are identified as minjung. According to minjung theologians, the "sinners" are those who were condemned and alienated by Judaism for failing to keep the laws in

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[70] B. Ahn, "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark," in *Minjung Theology*, p. 144.

[71] *Ibid.*

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

[73] See J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, p. 110.

[74] Cf. B. Ahn, "Jesus and the Minjung," p. 145.

Judaism. Fishermen, shepherds, prostitutes, and the sick were classified as "sinners" because they were not able to keep the Sabbath. Jeremias finds that "sinners" were defined both religiously and socially: "It was not only a fairly general designation for those who notoriously failed to observe the commandments of God and at whom, therefore, everyone pointed a finger, but also a specific term for those engaged in despised trades."[76] Here, our concern is not to identify the sinners in the social and religious context of first-century Palestine,[77] but to examine the two concrete examples of "sinners" as reported in the Gospels so as to be able to evaluate their minjung status.

i) A sinful woman (Lk 7.36-50). Luke reports that when Jesus was having a table fellowship in the house of one of the Pharisees, a woman, who was a *sinner*, came into the house with an alabaster jar of ointment and anointed Jesus' feet with the ointment. The Pharisee who invited Jesus said to himself: "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a *sinner*" (v. 39, NRSV). Seeing that both Luke and the Pharisee designated the woman a sinner, she must have been socially and religiously despised and marginalised. However, she does not seem to be materially poor, for she brought the ointment to anoint Jesus' feet.

ii) The other person who was designated a "sinner" in the Gospels is Zacchaeus (Lk 19.1-10). When Jesus entered Jericho, he located Zacchaeus, who was on a tree, and told him that he would stay at his house. At this, all those people on the scene grumbled and said: "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a *sinner*" (v. 7). According to Luke, Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector and was rich (v. 2). Zacchaeus said to Jesus that he would give half of his possessions to the poor and repay four times as much if he had defrauded anyone of anything. Although Zacchaeus was marginalised and alienated as a sinner by the people in Jewish society, he was not described as a poor and oppressed *min*, but as a rich oppressor of the people.

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[75] *Ibid.*

[76] J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, p. 109. See also G. Rengstorf, "*Hamartolos*," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, G. Kittel, ed., trans. G. Bromley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), I, pp. 321-322.

[77] For this, see John R. Donahue, "Tax Collectors and Sinners. An Attempt at Identification," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* Vol. 33, pp. 39-61.

Conclusion

There can be no question about the fact that the poor can be identified with the poor and oppressed *min* in *Sitz im Leben Jesu*. Most of the sick reported in the Gospels can be designated as *min*, though not all of them can be designated as the poor and oppressed *min*. Among the women who appear in the Gospels, we noted that some were poor and sick, but others were those who did not suffer from material poverty. Although we may include those poor and suffering women as the poor and oppressed *min*, not all women can be described as the poor and oppressed *min* on the basis of their gender. Again it is difficult to include all those who were condemned as "sinners" by the religious system among the poor *min*. The tax-collectors certainly cannot be included among the poor *min*.

Chapter Three. The Royal Status of Jesus

Introduction

In our effort to illuminate the *mokmin* praxis of Jesus, it is significant to establish his identity in the first place. We therefore cannot avoid the question 'who Jesus is'. In this regard, it is worth mentioning what R. S. Sugirtharajah says concerning Jesus research in the Third World:

> The question that summarizes the Third World yearning is not who Jesus is but where he is. . . [Jesus] cannot be pigeon-holed into dogmatic formulations. The key issue for the Third World Christians is summed up in the query of the wise men, who came from the east asking, 'Where is he?' (Mt 2.2). Like the wise men, what the Third World Christians are looking for is not explanations about Jesus, which we have in plenty, but the evidence of his presence. Is he with the poor, or is he with the rich? Is he with the oppressed, or is he with the oppressors? Is he with the perpetrators of violence, or is he with the victims of violence? In other words, what is important is not only retelling the story of Jesus but also actively following the praxis of Jesus and identifying with the dispossessed, the frail and the weak.[1]

There is no doubt about the importance of paying attention to the question 'where Jesus is'. However, it must not be overlooked that what makes the quest for the location of Jesus' ministry significant is the fact of his identity. The wise men from the east looked for Jesus because they had conviction concerning the identity of Jesus. The questions raised by Sugirtharajah above are meaningful because of the identity of Jesus. What we need in the Third World is to challenge the validity of the explanations about the historical Jesus and to present this figure through 'new eyes'. In this sense, we can argue that the location of Jesus' ministry becomes much more significant as we get a clearer picture about the identity of Jesus. It is for this reason that minjung theologians pay much attention to the description of the identity of the historical Jesus.

I. The Social Status of Jesus

One of the most distinctive elements in minjung theology is its perception of Jesus' status in relation to the minjung. According to minjung theologians, Jesus is perceived

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[1] R. S. Sugirtharajah, "'What Do Men Say Remains of Me?' Current Jesus Research & Third World Christologies," *AJT* 5:2 (1991), p. 336.

as a mere minjung.[2] The minjung theologians base their perception of Jesus' minjung status on the following biblical data: i) Jesus was from Galilee; ii) Jesus was a carpenter; iii) Jesus did not receive any formal education; and iv) Jesus was homeless. Minjung theologians not only perceive Jesus as a mere minjung but also reject any leadership role for Jesus. The Messiahship of Jesus is also denied in minjung theology. They may feel it is imperative to make Jesus one of the minjung, denying his role even as leader of the minjung, in order to highlight the existence of the minjung. However, it is our thesis that Jesus is not to be perceived as a minjung, but as a royal figure. Although we may admit that Jesus lived as a minjung, it is a totally different matter to perceive Jesus' being essentially a minjung. In other words, though the life-style of Jesus is that of a minjung, this does not lead to the identification of Jesus as minjung in the ontological sense. Although Jesus was not a minjung, he sided with the minjung and lived for them, thus embodying the *mokmin* spirit in his practice. In this respect, we argue that Jesus' life and mission represent the *mokmin* spirit. In this chapter, we will examine the description of Jesus' status in minjung theology and then present a different image of Jesus, i.e., the *mokmin* Jesus.

I.1. Description of Jesus' Status in Minjung Theology

Minjung theologians maintain that the historical Jesus was a minjung, rather than their leader or liberator. Drawing on this theological premise, minjung theologians discuss biblical materials to prove that Jesus was a minjung. They refer to his birthplace, his life and practice, his relationship with the minjung to support their arguments for Jesus' minjung status. Although minjung theologians unanimously take the view that Jesus' status was minjung, it is Byung-Mu Ahn who expounds the biblical data in a systematic way, and we will deal with the issue by mainly responding to Ahn's interpretation of the biblical narratives in the Gospels.

Jesus' Origin from Galilee

Ahn pays great attention to Mark's report that Jesus was from Galilee.[3] He explicitly argues that Mark contrasts himself with Matthew and Luke by referring to Galilee as

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[2] Dong-Kun Kim, *The Significance of the Historical Jesus in Contemporary Christologies: European, Latin American and Asian* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1992), p. 258.

Jesus' birthplace.[4] He also pays attention to Galilee as the major region of Jesus' ministry. According to Ahn, the significance of these observations in connection with the description of Jesus' status comes from the fact that Jesus was not a royal figure as Matthew and Luke endeavour to present him.[5] Ahn asserts that Mark, unlike Matthew and Luke, clearly assumes that Jesus was a Galilean (Mk 1.9). He points out that, though the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke mention Bethlehem as Jesus' birthplace, Mark does not include the birth narrative nor refer to Bethlehem as Jesus' birthplace, which indicates Mark's assumption that Jesus was from Galilee. According to Ahn, the reference to Bethlehem by Matthew and Luke as Jesus' birthplace shows their theological intention to describe Jesus as the Son of David who possesses royal authority, for Bethlehem was the hometown of king David.[6] The genealogy of Jesus was artificially fabricated by Matthew and Luke on the theological assumption that Jesus' family was descended from David.[7] Ahn cites Mark 1.9, in which Jesus is reported to have come from Nazareth in Galilee to be baptised by John, as the biblical basis for his argument that Mark presents Jesus as a Galilean. Ahn insists that Mark does not show any interest in presenting Jesus as the Son of David, though reporting other people's use of the title on two occasions in this Gospel. Ahn not only asserts that Jesus does not disclose any self-understanding of being the Son of David but goes so far as to argue that Jesus actually denies the public perception of his status as the Son of David.[8] Ahn takes Jesus' question about the Messiah and his sonship in Mk 12.37 as a clear indication of Jesus' denial of his status as the Son of David.[9] Thus, as far as this argument goes, the status of Jesus as a royal figure is rejected in minjung theology.

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[3] B. Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 18.

[4] B. Ahn, *ibid*, p. 20; see also his, *A Story of Minjung Theology*, p. 288.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] B. Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, pp. 18-19.

[7] B. Ahn, *A Story of Minjung Theology*, p. 287.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 288.

[9] *Ibid.*

Jesus the Carpenter

Minjung theologians refer to Jesus' occupation as a carpenter to support their assertion that Jesus was a minjung. Nam-Dong Suh argues: "Jesus was not like Moses who was educated in the palace and appeared to the minjung of Israel as their leader. Jesus was a carpenter and his disciples were mostly fishermen who belonged to the class of minjung in the contemporary social structure."[10] Suh insists that both a carpenter and a fisherman belong to the minjung. Ahn in turn rejects the view that a carpenter belonged to the middle class of that time.[11] Ahn refers to the response of the people in Jesus' hometown: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simeon, and are not his sisters here with us?" (Mk 6.3). Ahn asserts that this response suggests that a carpenter was not an occupation respected by people.[12]

Jesus without Formal Education

Minjung theologians refer to Jesus' lack of formal education as another evidence for Jesus' social status as a minjung. Again, Ahn refers to the response of the people in Jesus' hometown who wondered about the source of his wisdom. He interprets the reaction of Jesus' hometown people as an evidence of Jesus' lack of formal education. In Jn 7.15 the response of the Jews to the teaching of Jesus is stated in a more concrete way: "How does this man have such learning when he has never been taught?" Although Jesus was called "rabbi" (Mk 9.5, 11.21, 14.45; Mt 26.25,49; Jn 1.38), it was not an official title based on his formal education, and carries no significance except it being a respectful way of addressing him.[13] N. Suh argues that, being a man without proper education, Jesus can be counted as a minjung.[14]

Jesus the Homeless

Minjung theologians emphasise the fact that Jesus was a wandering preacher without any possessions. To support the perception of Jesus' status as a minjung, minjung

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[10] N. Suh, "Speaking on Minjung Theology," (in Korean) in *Studies on Minjung Theology*, p. 189.

[11] B. Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, pp. 19-20.

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 21-24.

theologians refer to Lk 9.58: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Ahn holds that this verse reflects Jesus' life of non-possession.[15] The instruction that Jesus gave to his disciples not to take for their journey anything except a staff represents the life-style of Jesus and proves his status as a minjung.[16]

I.2 Critique of Minjung Description of Jesus' Status

We cannot accept Ahn's argument for Jesus' minjung status on the basis of his birthplace for the following reasons. First, though Ahn argues that Jesus was born in Galilee, there is no clear evidence in Mark that suggests Galilee as Jesus' birthplace. Ahn bases his argument simply on his reading of Mk 1.9 which reports Jesus' coming from Galilee. As Matthew states that Jesus came from Galilee to be baptised by John (Mt 3.13), and Lk 4.14 refers to Jesus' returning to Galilee after his baptism and temptation, they both seem to suggest that Jesus came from Galilee before his baptism and temptation. In addition, both Matthew and Luke inform us of the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee (Mt 4.12-17; Lk 4.14-15). In both Matthew and Luke, Jesus is clearly known as a Galilean (Mt 26.69. cf. Lk 22.59; 23.6),[17] and his ministry is described in close relationship with the region of Galilee. Matthew records not only Jesus' words to his disciples at the Last Supper that he would go to Galilee ahead of them (Mt 26.32), but also the words of the angel who reminded Mary Magdalene and the other Mary of Jesus' intention to go to Galilee ahead of his disciples after his resurrection (Mt 28.7).[18] Given these data, it is difficult to argue that Mk 1.9 affirms Galilee as Jesus' birthplace, while Matthew and Luke, for theological reasons, emphasise the status of Jesus as the Son of David by referring to Bethlehem as his birthplace. If Matthew and Luke, who were well aware of the fact that Jesus was

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[14] N. Suh, "Speaking on Minjung Theology," p. 189.

[15] B. Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 27.

[16] B. Ahn, "The Subjects of History in Mark," p. 181.

[17] In Matthew 26.69 Jesus is directly designated as 'Jesus the Galilean' by a servant-girl of the house of the high priest, but in Luke 22.59 it is alluded that Jesus is from Galilee. In Lk 23.5 the Jewish leaders accuse Jesus of stirring up the people from Galilee and Pilate sends Jesus to Herod because he discovers Jesus to be a Galilean.

known as a Galilean, record Jesus' birth narratives and identify Bethlehem as Jesus' birthplace, it is proper to conclude that Jesus was born in Bethlehem but called a Galilean by contemporary people because he was raised and lived in Galilee. Secondly, it is difficult to accept Ahn's interpretation of Jesus' saying about the designation of the Messiah as the Son of David (Mk 12.37). Jesus is not denying the public understanding of the Messiah as the Son of David. Jesus' words are to be interpreted that he, being the Messiah as the Son of David, is also David's Lord. Seeing that the Evangelists report the fact that Jesus was addressed as the Son of David (cf. Mk 10.47 pars), they do not seem to have doubted that Jesus was the Son of David. We may then say that the Evangelists perceived Jesus both as the son of David and as more than a son of David.[19] If Mark consciously rejects Jesus' status as the Son of David, as Ahn insists, it is not easy to explain why Mark reports the episode in which Jesus is addressed as the son of David (Mk 10.47).[20] Thus, we may argue that Jesus was not denying his status as the son of David, but emphasising that he was more than David's son.[21] In addition, Ahn shows inconsistency in dealing with the biblical data. Although he makes much of the observation that in the Gospel of Mark neither Jesus nor his disciples use the title "son of David" in relation to himself, Ahn seems to overlook the fact that Jesus does not use the title for self-designation in Matthew and Luke. We are not given any instance in Matthew and Luke where Jesus' disciples call Jesus the Son of David. If Jesus' question about the Messiah's sonship of David is interpreted as indicating Jesus' explicit denial of his sonship of David, then it must follow that both Matthew and Luke also denied that Jesus was the Son of David, for they also record the same question (Mt 22.41-46; Lk 20.41-44).

Thirdly, Jesus' minjung status is not affirmed even if his status as the son of David is denied, and *vice versa*. Ahn assumes that, if Jesus' status as the Son of David is

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[18] The Lukan narrative of Jesus' resurrection also refers to Galilee (24.6). We may assume that in Luke Galilee also has been significant in Jesus' ministry.

[19] Hendrikus Boers, *Who Was Jesus? The Historical Jesus and the Synoptic Gospels* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), p. 21; cf. J. D. Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), pp. 109-114.

[20] Also see Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel according to St Mark*, p. 292, who holds that Mark did not deny Jesus' Davidic descent, for Mark saw no contradiction with the title "Son of David" used in Mk 10.47.

[21] Morna D. Hooker, *ibid.*, p. 292.

rejected, Jesus' minjung status will be necessarily affirmed. In connection with this rather simplistic assumption, it is noteworthy that Ahn refers to the lack of the concept of Jesus' pre-existence in the Gospel of Mark.[22] Ahn asserts that Mark rejects the idea that Jesus was a divine being, but perceived him as an ordinary human being.[23] Ahn holds that it is particularly significant that Mark rejected the divine quality of Jesus altogether at a time when people came to recognise Jesus' divine origin. However, whether it is Jesus' status as the son of David or his pre-existence that is rejected by Mark, it does not guarantee Jesus' social status as a minjung, for these are not the only factors that guarantee Jesus' non-minjung status. Fourthly, even if we were to accept Ahn's argument that Jesus was from Galilee, it is still difficult to perceive Jesus' social status as a minjung solely on that basis. It may be true that Galilee was a despised land at the time of Jesus, but it does not mean that all the residents in Galilee were minjung. Mark reports that Jesus came to Galilee (Mk 1.14), and began his ministry by visiting the synagogues and teaching there (Mk 1.21). Mark also describes the early ministry of Jesus in Galilee as proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons (Mk 1.39). Those people who attended the synagogues on the Sabbath were none other than Galileans. If they attended the synagogue on the Sabbath, they cannot be classified as minjung, for, according to minjung theologians, the minjung were those who were unable for various reasons to keep the Sabbath regulations. Referring to the rejection of Jesus in his hometown (Mk 6.1-6a), Ahn describes the people of Nazareth as minjung. However, they too attended the synagogue on the Sabbath, which indicates the fact that they were legitimate members of Israel. We need to point out that they were also Galileans. From these observations, we may conclude that Jesus' origin from Galilee would not prove his status as a minjung.

It seems to have been true that Jesus was a carpenter. However, as a carpenter, Jesus was a skilled worker and belonged to the middle class of Galilee.[24] Ahn himself admits that a carpenter who had his own workshop or was self-employed belonged to the middle class, though conjecturing that an employed carpenter could not have belonged

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[22] B. Ahn, *A Story of Minjung Theology*, p. 288.

[23] *Ibid.*

to the middle class.[25] Ahn does not supply any evidence to support his conjecture that Jesus and his father, who was also a carpenter, did not possess their own workshop. Moreover, it is not clear whether the people's response can be interpreted as indicating the low status of a carpenter. It may be more appropriate to interpret the negative reaction of Jesus' hometown people as due to the discrepancy between the image of Jesus as a carpenter that they had known and the image of Jesus as a teacher of great wisdom and a healer. Also, we cannot rule out the interpretation that Jesus the carpenter was well known in the community, which may allude to the fact that Jesus' reputation as a carpenter was well established. It is also incorrect to regard the fishermen in general as the minjung. Among Jesus' disciples there were some who were fishermen: Peter, his brother Andrew, James and John who are the two sons of Zebedee. Mark reports that the family of James and John was able to hire day labourers for their family business (Mk 1.20). Peter had his own house where Jesus was entertained (Mk 1.29ff.). These reports clearly demonstrate that the fishermen who were recruited as Jesus' disciples were not poor and so did not belong to the minjung.

Although it is argued that Jesus did not receive any formal education, it is not clear what minjung theologians mean by 'formal education'. When minjung theologians refer to Jesus' lack of formal education, does it mean that Jesus did not receive the public education that all the people were supposed to receive in Palestine? Some acknowledge the fact that there existed no institutionalised form of education for the general public during the time of Jesus.[26] If the rejection of Jesus' teaching by the people in Jesus' hometown is to be used as evidence of Jesus' lack of formal education, then the formal education that Jesus lacked would be the religious training to become a rabbi. As Jesus did not attend any rabbinic school, the people of Jesus' hometown would not accept the religious authority of Jesus' teaching. Jesus' lack of formal learning, also mentioned in Jn 7.15, must be understood as implying Jesus' lack of formal religious training.

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[24] Martin Hengel, *Property and Riches in the Early Church* (London: SCM Press, 1974), pp. 26-27.

[25] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 21.

[26] N. Suh, "Speaking on Minjung Theology," p. 189.

According to the logic sometimes applied to this point, anyone in the time of Jesus would be minjung if he lacked formal religious training. This position can be challenged by two observations in the immediate context of Mk 6.1-6. First, we cannot say that all the people of Jesus' hometown received such formal religious education which Jesus lacked. If this is so, they must be designated as minjung. But, as we have examined above, the people who showed such negative reaction against Jesus were not minjung but legitimate members of the Israelite community. Jesus also attended the synagogues on the Sabbath, indicating his non-minjung status. Secondly, Ahn seems simply to neglect Mark's report of Jesus' self-understanding expressed in response to the rejection of his hometown people. When the people took offence at him, Jesus said to them that "prophets are not without honour, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house" (Mk 6.4). It is obvious that Jesus understood himself to be a prophet.

Ahn is right in interpreting Luke 9.58 as an evidence showing Jesus' life of non-possession. However, it seems highly doubtful whether we can use this verse to support his assertion that Jesus was a minjung. To be able to interpret the verse properly, we need to examine the immediate context of the saying. This saying of Jesus is given in the form of a response to a person who expressed his intention to follow Jesus. Luke reports that it was an anonymous person who approached Jesus, but Matthew reports that it was a scribe (Mt 8.19). It is certain that the person did not perceive Jesus as a homeless person in the sense that he was destitute and had to beg for a living; if so, he would not have thought of following him. If the person was a scribe, it would have been hardly possible for him to seek to follow a poor Jesus, sacrificing all his social and religious honours. Jesus was already a public figure whom everyone sought to meet either for the cure of their physical sufferings or for his teaching. Even a centurion came to Jesus for help addressing him as "Lord" (Mt 8.5-13/ Lk 7.1-10). Then we may conclude that, though it is true that Jesus himself led a life of non-possession, it does not necessarily mean that his status was that of a poor homeless person.

Summary

We have discussed the view of minjung theologians who perceive Jesus as a mere minjung on the basis of his life and demonstrated that their views cannot be supported by the biblical data. Although we may find no difficulty in accepting that the historical data concerning Jesus' origin, occupation, and life without possession all suggest the simple and humble life of the historical Jesus, it is still difficult to identify Jesus as a minjung in the way minjung theologians understand the term, either in the socio-economic or the political dimension.

II. Jesus and the *Min*

What was the relationship between Jesus and the *min*? The way Jesus associated with the people around him offers us important information on how to perceive who he was. In this respect, minjung theologians are correct in presuming that the relationship between Jesus and the minjung will help us to decide not only the nature of Jesus' ministry but also his identity. Hence, it is not an irrelevant task for minjung theologians to attempt to determine Jesus' status from his relationship with the *ochlos*-minjung.[27] In this section, we will examine the relationship between Jesus and the *min*, responding to the minjung theologians who argue that Jesus presented himself as a minjung in his relationship with them.

II.1. Jesus and the *Min* in Minjung Theology

Byung-Mu Ahn emphasises that the illumination of the social character of the people will help us to perceive the historical Jesus in the proper context. Ahn notes the fact that the authors of the Gospels much emphasised "the people" and argues that this is because they considered the relationship between Jesus and the people to be crucial for the understanding of Jesus' identity and mission. Ahn criticises both form critics and redaction critics for failing to recognise this fact. According to Ahn, form critics view the editorial sections about the people surrounding Jesus as only the framework for the words of Jesus or for the kerygma that Jesus is the Christ. Therefore, the people have been excluded and, as a result, an important aspect has been lost. Ahn also criticises redaction critics on the ground that, though they consider the redaction framework

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[27] Cf. N. Suh, "Who are the Minjung?" in *Essays on Minjung*, pp. 545-546.

important both for understanding the viewpoint of the author and the import of Jesus' sayings in context, they too have paid little attention to the audience of Jesus. Redaction critics prefer to concentrate on 'the theology' of the author as found in his redactional statements and arrangements. Thus Ahn pays attention to the reality of the people, and proceeds to reflect on the identity and mission of Jesus in his relation to the people.

Jesus' Exclusive Association with the Minjung

Minjung theologians argue that the people with whom Jesus associated and who followed him were the minjung who belonged to the low class of society. According to Ahn, the Gospel of Mark records only two instances when Jesus was approached by the non-minjung: the ruler of a synagogue (Mk 5.22) and the rich young man (Mk 10.17f.).[28] Ahn argues that Jesus showed partisan love and concern exclusively for the poor, the oppressed, the alienated, and the sick, i.e., the so-called sinners of that time.[29] Jesus accepted the minjung unconditionally as sons and daughters of God. The criticism of Jesus as the friend of tax-collectors and sinners (Mt 11.19) proves the groups of people with whom Jesus associated.[30] In an effort to support their view of Jesus as a minjung rather than as the leader or liberator of the minjung, minjung theologians particularly emphasise Jesus' association with the tax collectors and sinners. Minjung theologians refer to the biblical data reporting that contemporary Jewish religious leaders criticised Jesus for associating with the tax-collectors and sinners. Nam-Dong Suh argues that "Jesus was a friend of tax collectors and sinners. In others words, Jesus was a friend of the minjung. He was not their leader, educator, liberator, but their friend."[31] He also argues that Jesus, by associating with the minjung as their companion, was called a friend of tax-collectors and sinners and this act of

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[28] B. Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 27. Ahn also notes that, though Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, requests the dead body of Jesus, he never appears during Jesus' earthly ministry. Ahn holds that this reference only shows in a symbolic way that, among the Jewish leaders, there were some, like Nicodemus who was a leader of the Jews, who understood Jesus.

[29] *Ibid.*

[30] *Ibid.*

[31] N. Suh, "Confluence of Two Stories," p. 245.

associating with the minjung was seen as a rebellious act against the ruling system,[32] or in opposition to the system of the rulers.[33] Suh even states that by becoming a friend of tax collectors and sinners, Jesus was conceived as a criminal.[34] Thus Jesus was an *ochlos*-minjung, according to minjung theologians.

The minjung theologians' perception of Jesus as an *ochlos*-minjung is also based on their argument that Jesus identified himself with the minjung. Nam-Dong Suh finds the biblical basis for this argument in Mt. 25.34-45: "Jesus identifies himself with the poor, the oppressed, the despised, the sick by using the expression, 'when *I* was hungry, when *I* was thirsty, when *I* was sick,' etc. This may be said to be unconditional identification or absolute identification, for Jesus does not require any religious or moral qualifications here. In other words, Jesus was the sick, the poor, the oppressed, the despised at any time at any place."[35] By identifying with the minjung, Jesus is a minjung. Besides arguing for the minjung status of Jesus, Suh also suggests the ontological identification of Jesus with the minjung, thus opening the possibility to argue that the minjung are Jesus.[36]

Jesus as the Collective Symbol of the Minjung

Minjung theologians not only hold the theological premise that Jesus was a minjung, but also go so far as to present the perception of Jesus as a collective symbol of the poor minjung. Jesus must be perceived not as an individual, but as a collective concept.[37] In some sense, this perception of Jesus as the personification or symbol of

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[32] N. Suh, *ibid.*, p. 246.

[33] N. Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," p. 161.

[34] N. Suh, *ibid.*, p. 159.

[35] N. Suh, "Jesus, Church History, and the Korean Church," (in Korean) in *Studies on Minjung Theology*, p. 12.

[36] Tae-Soo Im, "A New Examination on Nam-Dong Suh's Understanding of Jesus and the Minjung," *Shinhak Sasang* (Theological Thought) 86 (3, 1994), p. 177, explains that Suh does not understand Jesus' identification with the minjung as an ontological identification but as Jesus' intention to identify with the minjung. However, in her response to Im's article, Man-ja Choe criticises Im for failing to represent Suh's understanding correctly. According to Choe, Suh holds that Jesus and the minjung are identified in that both Jesus and the minjung perform the messianic role through their sufferings. See her, "Response to Im's 'Nam-dong Suh and Minjung Messianism,'" *Shinhak Sasang* (Theological Thought) 86 (3, 1994), pp. 181-185.

minjung is the hermeneutical presupposition underlying the minjung events taking place in the present historical context thereby interpreting events as reflecting the *missio Dei*.[38] Ahn argues that such terms as Son of God, Messiah, and Son of Man do not refer to the individual Jesus, but are used as collective words for minjung. Thus, according to Ahn, Jesus and minjung are not separated.[39] Ahn even considers the stories concerning Jesus recorded in the Gospels not as a biography of an individual but as a social biography of the minjung. Jesus' death is also interpreted as the crystallisation of the sufferings of the minjung. Jesus' passion and death exposes the fate of the minjung, not the individual Jesus. N. Suh perceives the death of Jesus in a similar way: "Jesus presented himself as a suffering minjung. There is no distinction between the story of Jesus and the story of the minjung. The fate of Jesus is the fate of the minjung. Jesus lived the life of a minjung and faced the fate of the minjung."[40]

> In the case of the Exodus, the revolution occurred only once at a historical point, while the event of the Crucifixion-Resurrection was aimed at permanent revolution. In the case of a one-time revolution, the minjung are the objects of salvation (salvation from outside). In the case of the permanent revolution, the minjung become the subjects of salvation (self-reliant salvation). Moses answered the cry (aspiration) of the people; but Jesus was the very cry (aspiration) of the people themselves. In this sense, Jesus was truly *a part of* the minjung, not just *for* the minjung. Therefore, Jesus was the personification of the minjung and their symbol.[41]

The theological presuppositions that underlie the minjung theologians' perception of Jesus as a collective being are 1) the rejection of the application of subject-object schema in describing the relationship between Jesus and the minjung, and 2) the application of the concept of "event" to describe the historical Jesus.[42] These

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[37] Ki-Deuk Song, "The Identity of Minjung Theology," (in Korean) in *Development of Minjung Theology in the 1980s*, p. 81.

[38] N. Suh, "Confluence of Two Stories," p. 244.

[39] B. Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 138, argues: "we cannot think of Jesus of Galilee without the minjung, and we cannot think of the minjung in the Gospels without Jesus. . . .There is no separate story of Jesus nor a separate story of the minjung, but there is only 'our' story. This story tells us the stages in which Jesus and the minjung live together. Therefore we should admit not only that the Gospels are not a biography of Jesus, but also that they are the history which tells of the Jesus movement."

[40] N. Suh, "Study on Folktales from the Counter-Theological Pespective," (in Korean) in *Studies on Minjung Theology*, p. 297.

[41] N. Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," p. 159.

theological presuppositions have influenced their description of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus as well as his Messiahship.

In an article, "The Subjects of History in Mark," published in 1982, Ahn finds a biblical basis to interpret Jesus in a collective way in Jesus' use of the title "Son of Man".[43] Ahn holds that Jesus' self-designation as the Son of Man has the figure "like a son of man" in Dan 7.13-14 as its background. As the Danielic figure "like a son of man" has a collective character, Jesus' use of the title for self-designation also contains a collective meaning. Ahn supports his argument by referring to T. W. Manson's interpretation that Jesus determined to suffer as the Son of Man.[44] Although more recently Ahn has denied that Dan 7.13-14 lies behind Jesus' use of the title "Son of Man",[45] it is practically the only biblical citation provided by minjung theologians for perceiving Jesus as a collective symbol of the minjung.

II.2. Problems with the Perception of Jesus' Relationship with the Poor *Min* in Minjung Theology

Jesus' Status in relation to the Min

It seems doubtful that Jesus' status as a minjung is affirmed by his association with the people for the following reasons. First, it is not quite right to claim that Jesus associated only with people identified with minjung. Minjung theologians characterise

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[42] Cf. Soon-Kyong Park, "National Unification and Problems of Minjung Theology," *Shinhak Sasang* (Theological Thought) 80 (Spring, 1993), p. 67.

[43] B. Ahn, "The Subjects of History in Mark," (in Korean) in *Minjung and Korean Theology*, p. 181.

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] Answering the question how Jesus' activities and suffering can be interpreted in a corporate way in relation to the messianic titles and his messianic consciousness, Ahn argues that Jesus' self-designation as the Son of Man does not contain the image of Danielic messiah or any other messianic meanings, but simply shows Jesus' humble attitude in designating himself as a mere man. See B. Ahn, "Minjung Jesus," *Shinhak Sasang* (Theological Thought) 55 (1986), pp. 918-919.

It is G. Vermes who champions the view that Jesus used the Son of Man as a self-reference. He rejects the titular use of the Son of Man as referring to the apocalyptic Son of Man. Cf. G. Vermes, "The use of *barnash/bar nasha* in Jewish Aramaic," in M. Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, pp. 310-328; *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), pp. 163-168, 188-191; *Jesus and the World of Judaism* (London: SCM Press, 1983), pp. 89-99. But this theory of the circumlocutory use of the Son of Man for "I" is criticised by other scholars. Cf. S. Kim, *The Son of Man as the Son of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), pp. 13-37. See also J. A. Fitzmyer, "Review of *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*," *CBQ* 30 (1968), pp. 417-428; see also his, "The Contribution of Qumran Aramaic to the Study of the New Testament," *NTS* 20 (1973/74), pp. 396f..

the people surrounding Jesus as the *ochlos*-minjung, but, as we have shown above, it is a mistake to equate all the people surrounding Jesus with those whom these theologians class as the minjung, i.e., the poor, the sick, the socially despised like tax-collectors and sinners, and women. According to the Gospel of Luke, Jesus had table fellowship at least three times with the Jewish religious leaders (Lk 7.36; 11.37; 14.1). If we read the story of Jesus' having the Last Supper (Mk 14.22-25 par.), we find that Jesus and his disciples were entertained by an anonymous "owner of a house" in the city of Jerusalem which clearly indicates that Jesus had association with that person. The person who was the owner of the house was rich enough to prepare the Passover meal for Jesus and his company.

Secondly, in spite of the intention of minjung theologians, the argument that Jesus' table fellowship with the tax-collectors and sinners proves the minjung status of Jesus actually refutes their attempt to present Jesus as a minjung. If Jesus was perceived as a minjung, as minjung theologians argue, why do the scribes of the Pharisees criticised Jesus for having a meal with the minjung? If Jesus was a minjung and people perceived the historical Jesus as a minjung, there would be no point in Jesus' saying not to be scandalise by him, for it would have been accepted as a natural practice for Jesus, a minjung, to associate with other people belonging to the minjung. If Jesus was a minjung himself, it would be ridiculous for the Jewish leaders to regard Jesus' associating with other minjung as a rebellious act. Why was Jesus seen as opposing the system of the rulers by doing so? These questions make it clear that Jesus was not perceived as a minjung in contemporary Jewish society. The accusation brought against Jesus for associating with tax collectors and sinners is probably the strongest evidence for the *non*-minjung status of Jesus, for the reaction of the people against Jesus' association with the tax collectors and sinners eloquently testifies that Jesus was not perceived as a minjung. The Jewish leaders must have accused Jesus of associating with the tax collectors and the sinners because it was not perceived as the right behaviour for one who claimed to teach and heal with divine authority.[46] If the Jewish religious leaders regarded Jesus as one of the minjung, as minjung theologians argue, there would have existed no reason for them to be scandalised by his sharing a meal with the tax-collectors and sinners, by a minjung having a meal with other minjung.

Thirdly, Jesus actually disclosed his role as the leader of the people. For Ahn, Mk 6.34 discloses Jesus' attitude toward the *ochlos*: "Jesus had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd." As Ahn notes, the expression "sheep without a shepherd" comes from the Old Testament, and it is given in the context of accusing the rulers of neglecting their responsibility of taking care of the people (Ezek. 34.5). It is important to mention the fact that by designating *ochlos* as sheep without a shepherd, Jesus revealed his self-understanding as the shepherd of the *ochlos*. Jesus proved that he is their shepherd by providing them with food (Mk 6.35-44). It then becomes clear that Jesus understands himself as the shepherd-leader of the *ochlos*, fulfilling and replacing the role of the political leaders in relation to the *ochlos*-minjung.

Ahn refers to Lk 15.2ff. to support his argument that Jesus always sided with the oppressed, the aggrieved, and the weak: "He leaves the other ninety-nine sheep in the pasture and goes looking for the one that got lost until he finds it."[47] Ahn does not realise that, by referring to this pericope, he actually endorses the view that Jesus was the leader of the minjung, thus destroying one of the foundation stones of minjung theology. Here, Jesus is pictured as the shepherd of the *ochlos*-minjung, the leader who takes care of them. It is Ahn himself who emphasises the leadership of Jesus in his relation with the *ochlos*-minjung by saying that "Mark views sinners as the *ochlos* and says definitely that Jesus came to the world for the *ochlos*."[48] Not only Byung-Mu Ahn but Nam-Dong Suh makes a self-contradictory remark that has a significant bearing on the validity of the biblical basis of minjung theology. Suh seems to be consistent in describing Jesus as the friend of the minjung, not as their leader, educator, or liberator.[49] But Suh contradicts his own argument only several lines below by stating that "Jesus, in his parables that he used as the major means *to educate the* minjung,

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[46] Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel according to St Mark*, p. 96.

[47] B. Ahn, "Jesus and People (Minjung)," p. 169.

[48] B. Ahn, "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark," p. 147. It is significant that Nam-Dong Suh also expresses a similar view in another context: "We should become pioneers of the new history in which the minjung become the subjects of history. We need politicians who have roots in the minjung, represent the minjung, and serve the minjung. We need political leaders who, not siding with the political parties but with the minjung, can serve the minjung." *Ibid.* This statement contains a strong yearning for the appearance of a political leader who will serve the minjung.

[49] N. Suh, "Confluence of Two Stories," p. 59.

called upon the commitment and responsibility of the minjung."[50] Hence, it is obvious that Suh presents Jesus as the educator of the minjung.

It is true that in Mt 25.31-46 Jesus identifies himself with the poor, the sick, the stranger, and the imprisoned (vv. 35-36). However, it should be noted that Jesus also identifies himself with "the least of these my brethren": "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (v. 40). Though Jesus identifies himself with the minjung, he also designates them as "the least of my brethren". This designation implies two things. First, Jesus understands his relationship with the minjung in terms of a family relationship. This fact is emphasised by minjung theologians on the basis of their exposition of Mk 3.31-34. Secondly, they do not represent all the brothers of Jesus, but are only "the least" of them. In other words, the minjung described in the pericope are just some of Jesus' brothers.[51] If Jesus perceived them as some of his brothers, then it is not possible to argue that Jesus identified himself ontologically with the minjung.

Minjung theologians do not pay attention to the *identity* of Jesus in this pericope but simply focus on identifying Jesus with the minjung. However, we need to read carefully to see how Jesus presents himself in the pericope. In v. 31 Jesus refers to the enthroned Son of Man who comes as the final judge. The significant fact to note is that the speaker who identifies himself with the minjung is none other than the King (vv.

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[50] N. Suh, *ibid.*, p. 53.

[51] In Mt 25 the expression *the least* in "the least of these my brethren" must be interpreted as containing the concept of degree. They are a particular group of people among Jesus' brethren. In other words, *the least* constitute just a part of the people whom Jesus calls *my brethren*. Then who are Jesus' brethren? The people whom Jesus designates as his brethren are his disciples in the broad sense of the word. Not only the twelve disciples of Jesus but all those who do the will of God are called to be Jesus' brothers (Mk 3.34). In Mt 18.15-22 the term "brother" refers to relationship among Jesus' followers. It is then be correct to see that those whom Jesus calls his brethren are all those who belong to Jesus community. The least *of my brethren* refer to a specific group of people among those whom Jesus call as his brethren. *Contra* R.T. France, *The Gospel according to Matthew: an introduction and commentary* (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1985), p. 357, who argues that it is inappropriate to relate the least of these to a specific group. The least of Jesus' brethren, that is, of Jesus community are those described in vv. 35-36: those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, and sick; a stranger; and those who are in prison. The word 'least' does not designate their rank or status in the society. It must be taken as depicting simply their situation in need of help from other people. Thus we can take the term as designating all the needy, whoever they may be, and not only Christians. Pierre Bonnard, *L'Evangile selon Saint Matthieu* (Neuchatel: Editions Delachaux & Niestle, 1963), p. 367. See also Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1990), p. 112; J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 143.

34, 40). Although the speaker, i.e., the King, identifies himself with the minjung, it is not to reveal his status as minjung but to commend the righteous for their good deeds and to judge the unrighteous for eternal punishment. When the King commends the righteous for helping him, they ask in wonder when they received him, addressing the speaker as Lord (v. 37). The King's response gives us a clue to understanding the sense in which Jesus identifies himself with the minjung. The King considers their good deeds done for the least of his brethren as the deed done for him. If the King not only values the help they extended to the minjung but judges them on the basis of what they did to one of the minjung, both the righteous and the unrighteous would realise that the minjung are not to be despised simply because they are minjung. The parable does not emphasise the minjung status of Jesus but, on the contrary, the royal status of the minjung. Even though the poor and the oppressed are referred to as the least of Jesus' brethren, they are announced by the King himself as his brothers. Considering that Jesus here appears as the royal Son of Man, the one of the least of Jesus' brethren has the dignity of being counted as the royal Son of Man's brother. The least of Jesus' brethren, together with the other brothers of Jesus, constitute the royal family of God.

We may conclude that Jesus cannot be described as a minjung simply because he identified himself with the minjung. If Jesus is a minjung, it is pointless to emphasise his identification with the minjung, for, whether he identifies himself with the minjung or nor, he is already counted as a minjung. On the contrary, the fact that Jesus identified himself with the minjung affirms the non-minjung status of Jesus. The theological implication of Jesus' identification should be exactly opposite to the argument of the minjung theologians. Because Jesus identified himself with the minjung, the status of the minjung is elevated to royal status. In this pericope, it is not the minjung status of Jesus, but the royal status of the minjung, that is emphasised by Jesus.

Jesus as the Symbol of the Minjung

We need to examine the context of Dan 7 to determine the validity of the perception of Jesus as the collective symbol of the minjung. The title of Son of Man that Jesus used for self-designation has as its background the figure "like a son of man" in Dan 7. The one like a son of man in Dan 7.13 appears as a divine figure, not identified with a particular earthly individual. Daniel does not see in a vision the Son of Man but merely compared the one whom he saw in his vision to a human. In Daniel's vision, the figure

"like a son of man" comes with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days. The reference to the clouds indicates that the figure like a son of man is a deity appearing in human form or likeness.[52] This divine figure like a son of man is described as receiving dominion, glory and kingship from the Ancient of Days (Dan 7.14). As the four beasts that Daniel saw before the one "like a son of man" (7.3-8) represent four kings (7.17), the one "like a son of man" is also a kingly figure.[53] We notice a shift of the imagery from the one "like a son of man" to the saints of the Most High who also receive the kingdom (7.18, 22, 27). The one "like a son of man" seems to be identified with the saints of the Most High in that they receive the kingdom. Hence the one "like a son of man" is a type of corporate personality and represents the saints of the Most High.[54] Thus it seems obvious that, by using the Son of Man title, Jesus claims to be the corporate representative of the saints of the Most High.[55] It does not seem correct to assert that the one like a son of man is simply the collective symbol of the saints of the Most High, for the one like a son of man is not equated ontologically with the saints of the Most High. The one like a son of man and the saints of the Most High seem to refer to separate entities, and the one like a son of man appears as a representative of the saints of the Most High. Here it is imperative to identify the saints of the Most High in order to determine whether Jesus represents the minjung or not. In Daniel, the saints of the Most High receive the kingdom, thus they are given kingly authority. We observe three things concerning the one "like a son of man" in Daniel: first, he is a divine being; secondly, he is a kingly figure; thirdly, he appears as a corporate personality representing the Saints of the Most High. It is difficult, therefore, to argue that they designate the minjung. Thus, even if we accept the interpretation of Jesus'

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[52] S. Kim, *The Son of Man as the Son of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), p. 15.

[53] T. W. Manson, "The Son of Man in Daniel, Enoch and the Gospels," *Studies in the Gospels and the Epistles* (1960), p. 143.

[54] See I. H. Marshall, "The Son of Man in Contemporary Debate," *EQ* 17 (1970), p. 85, n. 7.; S. Kim, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

[55] Drawing on these observations, Kim goes so far as to argue that Jesus, by using *the* Son of Man for self-designation, was in effect saying: "I am *the* Son of Man whom Daniel saw in his vision." See S. Kim, *ibid.*, p. 35. Cf. C.F.D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 14; I. H. Marshall, "The Synoptic Son of Man Sayings in Recent Discussion," *NTS* 12 (1966), p. 71.

identity as a collective being, it does not necessarily make Jesus' status as a collective symbol of the minjung.

We need to examine other biblical passages in the New Testament in order to decide whether Jesus' use of the title son of Man designates the collective minjung or the individual Jesus. There has been much discussion about the gospel pronouncements on the Son of Man. It is generally accepted among scholars that the Son of Man sayings are classified into three groups: i) the sayings that refer to the earthly activity of the Son of Man (Mk 2.10, 28); ii) the sayings that refer to the suffering of the Son of Man (Mk 8.31; 9.9, 12; 9.31; 10.33-34; 10.45; 14.21, 41); iii) the sayings that refer to the future coming of the Son of Man (Mk 8.38; 13.26; 14.62).[56] There is no consensus among scholars on the authenticity of each group.[57] Those who accept only the sayings in group iii) in which Jesus distinguishes himself from the coming Son of Man as authentic deny the authenticity of the sayings in groups i) and ii) and claim them as creations of the early church in the light of their Easter experience. Those who reject the authenticity of the apocalyptic Son of Man sayings in group iii) also hold that they are creations of the early church. Instead of attempting to settle the issue here, we will work on the assumption that all three groups of sayings represent Jesus' authentic sayings.[58]

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[56] Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribners & Sons, 1951), Vol. 1, p. 30.

[57] S. Kim, *The Son of Man as the Son of God*, p. 7, observes that there are two diametrically opposed positions concerning the authenticity of the Son of Man sayings. According to Kim, some scholars like E. Schweizer, R. Leivestad, and G. Vermes, accept some sayings of group i) and possibly of group ii) as authentic, while rejecting the sayings of group iii) as a whole as inauthentic, and others like R. Bultmann, G. Bornkamm, H.E. Todt, A. J. B. Higgins, R. H. Fuller, and C. Colpe, take only a few saying of group iii) as authentic and reject the sayings of groups i) and ii) as inauthentic.

[58] It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the issues concerning the use and background of the Son of Man. We will take the position of H. Ridderbos who, summing up the often laborious and confused discussions about the Son of Man, contends for both the authenticity of the Son of Man sayings and the use of the apocalyptic Son of Man. See H. Ridderbos, *Studies in Scripture and its Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 102-103 where he concludes his survey of the discussions about the Son of Man as follows: "Out of all these often laborious and confused discussions about the Son of Man, amid all that is uncertain, two things came to the fore: first, that on purely historical grounds the use of this name by Jesus, in close relationship to his own person, can hardly be denied; and second, that Jesus has put himself in direct relationship with the figure invested with power in the apocalyptic prophecy of Daniel." He also adds that this conclusion should not be understood to mean that only the apocalyptic Son of Man sayings are authentic.

For the view that ascribes all three groups of the Son of Man sayings to the historical Jesus, see S. Kim, *ibid.*, pp. 7-14.

Jesus used the Son of Man title to indicate himself, not for the minjung collectively. In all the son of Man sayings in the New Testament it is always Jesus himself that is designated by the title. In this sense, it is partially correct to argue that the Son of Man title is for self-designation.[59] When a young man requested to follow Jesus, he was told that "the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." The Son of Man here designated Jesus himself. The use of the third person singular possessive pronoun "his" also affirms the use of the Son of Man for Jesus as an individual. This aspect will be evident in Jesus' use of the Son of Man in the passion narratives.

Jesus' Death and Resurrection as Collective Death and Resurrection of the Minjung

According to minjung theologians, Jesus' death can be interpreted in a collective way, for Jesus suffered and died as the Son of Man. However, the historical fact that the individual Jesus of Nazareth was killed on the cross should not be rejected. As we have shown above, the use of the title Son of Man does not support the perception of Jesus' identity as the symbolic representation of the minjung, so the perception of Jesus' death as the death of the collective minjung cannot stand. We may elicit various symbolic meanings from the cross-event, but it must be affirmed that it was Jesus of Nazareth, an individual historical being, who died on the cross. To substantiate our criticism of the perception of Jesus' death as a collective death of the minjung, we need to investigate the passages where Jesus as the Son of Man predicts his imminent death. It will also be necessary to examine how minjung theologians interpret the historicity of the cross-event in contrast to the presentation of the cross in the *kerygma* of the early Church.

a) Suffering of Jesus as an Individual

As Jesus' use of the title "the Son of Man" does not support the description of Jesus' status as a minjung, his death as the Son of Man does not prove the validity of the interpretation of his death as the death of the collective minjung. However, we need to examine some key passages where Jesus predicts his death and resurrection as the Son

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[59] Ahn, *A Story of Minjung Theology*, p. 97. The unacceptable aspect of Ahn's argument is that Jesus' use of the Son of Man does not have Daniel 7 as its background and thus carries no messianic claim.

of Man (cf. Mk 8.31; 9.9, 12; 9.31; 10.33-34; 10.45; 14.21, 41) so as to identify any suggestion of the collective death of the minjung.

Mk 8.31 pars. This is the first prediction of Jesus' death and resurrection as the Son of Man, which is revealed after the confession of Peter concerning the messianic identity of Jesus. After Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus began to teach them that "the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." Here the title "the Son of Man" clearly designates Jesus himself. In Matthew 16.21 "the Son of Man" is substituted by the third person pronoun "he", thus affirming Jesus as the subject of the suffering. The reaction of Peter also indicates that he understood Jesus' prediction of his own death as a personal event.

Mk 10.45 pars. In this logion, Jesus announces the nature of his mission in terms of service and death for the many. It is obvious that we cannot equate the Son of Man in this verse with the collective minjung. The Son of Man definitely designates Jesus himself who claims to have come "not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Although Jesus claims his status as the divine, kingly figure of the Son of Man, he discloses the nature of his mission differently from that of the one "like a son of man" in Dan 7. In Dan 7 the one "like a son of man" is served by all peoples, nations, and languages (Dan 7.14). However, Jesus states that he came not to be served but to serve. Jesus repeatedly describes that his mission as the Son of Man is to suffer death by the hands of the Jewish religious leaders and rise again after three days (Mk 8.31; 9.9, 12; 9.31; 10.33-34; 10.45; 14.21, 41). But it is in this logion that Jesus explicitly discloses the meaning of his death, thus deserving our attention.

Although there is no consensus on the background of Mk 10.45b, it will be appropriate to take the view that both Isa 43.3f. and Isa 53.10-12 are behind Mk 10.45b.[60] In this sense, Jesus' description of his mission in Mk 10.45b is the fulfilment of both Isa 43 and Isa 53. In Isa 43.3f. Yahweh says that out of his love for Israel he will give nations as ransom for the sins of Israel. The nations will be given to suffer vicariously to save Israel. On the other hand, Isa 52.13-53.12 describes Israel's vicarious suffering for the nations. By combining these two passages, Jesus understood his mission in terms of his vicarious self-surrender for all men, for both Israel and the

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nations.[61] A ransom is given to redeem or liberate others. To offer one's life as a ransom is to be willing to die so that others may live.[62] Thus it becomes clear that Jesus understood his mission was to die for others. It is not the death of the collective minjung.

In this regard, it is interesting to note that Ahn himself interprets Jesus' death as vicarious death for the minjung. In a context where he emphasises Jesus' partiality for the poor, Ahn states that: "Jesus did not come for the rulers, the wealthy, the exemplary citizen and the intellectuals of the society. He sided with the minjung as their friend and died for the minjung."[63] Explaining how the minjung came to participate in the death of Jesus, Ahn argues that though the minjung became disappointed and fled at the sight of Jesus' death, they came to have solidarity with Jesus' death when they saw their passion in Jesus' passion and their death in Jesus' death.[64] He then argues that "the death of Jesus is perceived by the minjung as an act of sacrificing himself 'for us,' 'for our sins,' or 'on behalf of us.'"[65] Ahn further notes that such an awareness will make the minjung identify the one who sacrificed his life "for them", which in turn will necessarily demand a more mature development of Christology.[66]

b) Historicity of the Cross-Event

Byung-Mu Ahn asserts that Jesus event was dehistoricised in the kerygma of the early church and analyses 1 Cor 15.3-8 and Phil 2.6-11 to support his argument.[67] He asserts that the kerygma in 1 Cor 15.3-8 cuts off the historical concern about "when, where,

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[60] For a detailed discussion on the background of Mk 10.45, see S Kim. *op. cit.*, pp.52-58.

[61] S. Kim, *ibid.*; Mowinckel also explains that the mission of the Ebed Yahweh, who has been chosen as Yahweh's deputy and equipped for a special work in Yahweh's service, was at first for the people and community of Israel (49.5), but later expanded to include all the nations of the world (49.6; 52.4). S. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*. trans. G.W. Anderson(Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956), p.114.

[62] A. Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity*, p. 114.

[63] B. Ahn, "Nation, Minjung, Church," p.24.

[64] B. Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p.283.

[65] *Ibid.*

[66] *Ibid.*

[67] B. Ahn, "The Body of Jesus-Event Tradition," *EAJT* 3.2 (1985), p. 295-299.

why and by whom Jesus was killed". According to Ahn, such expressions as 'according to the Scriptures' or 'for our sin' resulted in evading the description of the historical fact.[68] Ahn argues that Phil 2.6-11, the so-called Christ-Hymn, made the historicity of Jesus-event obscure by emphasising the pre-existence of Christ and his return to the heavenly place.[69] He holds that the expression of 'death by the cross' in Phil 2.8 does not refer to the death of Jesus as a historical event or as the saving event at all.[70] Ahn argues that Paul is responsible for consolidating the trend to dehistoricise the Jesus-event already formed in the early Church.[71] The evidence for dehistoricisation is that Paul, instead of analysing the historical background of the cross-event, simply presents the meaning of the cross-event.[72] Ahn further argues that, by the doctrinal presentation of the cross in the kerygma, the significance of the cross-event as a historical event became neglected and made into a symbol cut off from political reality. Ahn even asserts that the perception of the cross-event in the kerygma provides the pretext to justify the political neutrality of Christianity.

What we observe here is that Ahn, by criticising the kerygma in the early church which allegedly dehistoricised the death of Jesus,[73] in fact emphasises the historicity of

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[68] B. Ahn, *ibid.*, p. 295. Soon-Kyong Park, "National Unification and Problems of Minjung Theology," p. 69 criticises Ahn for excluding the possibility of interpreting the expressions 'according to the Scriptures' and 'for our sin' as the recapture of the historical event of Jesus' death. According to Park, the expression 'according to the Scripture' represents the interpretation that the historical Jesus event was an eschatological event that embodies the Old Testament tradition of salvation. The meaning of the salvation history presented in the Old Testament is summarised by the expression 'according to the Scriptures' in the light of the crucifixion and resurrection of the historical Jesus. Park argues that, in this sense, the expression does not reflect the tendency to dehistoricise the Jesus event as a historical fact.

[69] Ahn, *ibid.*, p. 297.

[70] *Ibid.*

[71] Ahn holds that the logia, "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures" (1 Cor 15.3) and "He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death" (Phil 2.8), reflect the doctrinal presentation of the Jesus-event that was formulated in the early Church before Paul. Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 243. But he asserts that Paul accepted this formula and consolidated them.

[72] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 243.

[73] S. Park, "National Unification and Problems of Minjung Theology," p. 55-80 asserts that the Christ-Kerygma of the early church did not dehistoricise the historical Jesus-event. She argues that the Christ-Kerygma of the early church is also a faith-event that responds to the work of God, i.e., the Jesus-event. The reference to Jesus' resurrection in the Kerygma presupposes the cross-event that summarises the ministry of the historical Jesus, and so cannot be criticised as separated from the historical fact. *Ibid.*, p. 68. As the Gospels were written in the historical context in which the cross-

the death of Jesus. He explicitly claims that the death of Jesus was a historical fact.[74] It seems that Ahn criticises the Christ-kerygma of the early church because he cannot reconcile the confession of Jesus as the Christ who became the object of worship of the institutionalised church with the theological presupposition in minjung theology that perceives Jesus as a minjung. However, we may point out that Ahn looks at only one side of the coin. By emphasising the historicity of the death of Jesus, Ahn actually destroys his own argument that Jesus is the collective symbol of the minjung. If the historicity of the Jesus event, i.e., the death of Jesus, is affirmed, it must also be argued that it was the historical Jesus, not the collective minjung, who was executed on the cross. Here, it is worth quoting N. Suh's remark on the historicity of the Jesus-event to the effect that: "Jesus of Nazareth was misunderstood as a political activist and so was executed on the cross that had been used to execute the Zealots. The execution of Jesus on the cross is a historical event."[75] Suh makes it clear that it was the historical Jesus who was executed. Suh also holds that the Jesus-event as a historical event was dehistoricised in the early church, but emphasises that it was the individual Jesus who was executed: "If Jesus of Nazareth was not a historical figure, our faith as Christians would be in vain. Even though the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus after three days were historical events that took place in the course of the life of Jesus as a historical being, they have been dehistoricised in the Christian faith."[76] Although Suh's intention in emphasising the historicity of the Jesus-event was to criticise the perception of this event as apolitical in the early church, he unwittingly refutes the perception of Jesus' death as a collective death of the minjung.

c) Jesus' Resurrection as Individual Resurrection

It is not exceptional that minjung theologians present self-conflicting interpretations concerning Jesus' resurrection. Although N. Suh interprets the resurrection of Jesus as a symbol of the minjung revolt, he has to admit, by alluding to the historicity of the

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event of the historical Jesus was perceived in the light of his resurrection, it would be an abstract task to attempt to reconstruct the Jesus-event itself not affected by this hermeneutical construct.

[74] Ahn, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

[75] N. Suh, "The Biblical Reference for Minjung Theology," p. 234.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 317.

announcement of the young man in white robe, that it was Jesus of Nazareth who rose from the dead and went to Galilee ahead of the disciples. It is also noted that B. Ahn claims the historicity of Jesus' resurrection by criticising the Christ-kerygma of the early church. Although Ahn criticises the Christ-Kerygma,[77] he takes the story about the empty tomb as "the most concrete proof supporting the historicity of

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[77] Ahn regards the reference to the resurrection of Jesus in the kerygma as non-historical. He notes that the expression 'on the third day', the reference to Peter and James as eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection, the reference to the twelve disciples, and the inclusion among the witnesses of Jesus' resurrection (1 Cor 15.4-8) are incongruous with the reports of the Gospels, and concludes that all these references do not reflect historical facts. Ahn, "The Body of Jesus-Event Tradition," (in Koren) in *Development of Minjung Theology in the 1980s* (Seoul: Korea Theological Research Institute, 1990), p.304. 1) He holds that the statement that "Jesus was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures"(1 Cor 15.4) does not reflect historical fact. 2) In connection with this, he also doubts the historicity of the prediction of the resurrection "in three days" in the passion narratives. He holds that the presupposition that Jesus would rise in three days is nowhere reflected in the passion story. He asserts that, if such prediction was actually made, the betrayal of the disciples and the last exclamation of Jesus on the cross cannot be explained. *Ibid.*, pp. 303-304. 3) In the passion narratives, there is no report that the resurrected Jesus appeared to Peter, and there is no information about James' becoming a believer, though he exerted authority in the Jerusalem church. The reference to Peter and James only reflects the domination system within the Jerusalem church, i.e., the ruling system of the church that maintained the church organisation in the face of Judaism and the Roman empire. 4) Ahn asserts that the reference to the five hundred witnesses was intended to suppress the minjung tradition and does not accept it as historical fact. *Ibid.*, p. 298. 5) Ahn also observes that the reference to the twelve apostles is not historically probable, for there were only eleven apostles at the time of Jesus' resurrection. *Ibid.* So he takes the concept of the twelve apostles as a symbol of the authority of the church. The insertion of Paul himself in the list of the witnesses of Jesus' resurrection represents the trans-temporal understanding of the resurrection.

However, these observations are not sufficient to reject the Christ-Kerygma as a non-historical understanding of Jesus' resurrection. First, Ahn rejects the historicity of the repeated prediction of Jesus' resurrection in three days on the basis of the failure of the disciples to recognise it. Ahn himself states that the disciples were completely ignorant of the passion of Jesus. *Ibid.*, p.304. This does not imply that Jesus did not predict his death and resurrection in three days, but that the disciples did not understand the repeated prediction of the death and resurrection of Jesus (cf. Mk 9.10, 30). Although we may admit that the expression 'on the third day' is a symbolic one, it must still be admitted that it reflects an interpretation of Jesus' resurrection based on the historical fact. Soon-Kyong Park points out that the tradition of the resurrection was not uniform and that we cannot take the interpretive description of the resurrection as non-historical. See her, "National Unification and Problems of Minjung Theology," p.72.

Ahn holds that Mark presupposes Jesus' appearance to the disciples at Galilee, although the story about the appearance after resurrection is omitted by Mark as a result of the shorter ending at Mk 16.8. *Ibid.*, p.304. As Ahn takes Mk 16.7 where the young man in a white robe announces Jesus' going to Galilee as an important reference for minjung theology, he does not question the authenticity of the saying. It is then highly probable that Jesus appeared to Peter in Galilee. It must also be admitted that the authority of the apostles and that of the Jerusalem church depended on the authority of the kerygma, i.e., the authority of the testimony to the resurrected Jesus. Cf. S. Park, *ibid.*, p. 71. The insertion of Paul himself in the list of the witnesses of Jesus' resurrection is related to his conversion experience on the Damascus road. Based on the experience the Damascus-event, Paul claims his apostolic authority. Although the exact time when Paul encounter with the resurrected Jesus cannot be given, it must be admitted that the encounter took place in time as a historical event. So Paul finds it natural to put his name in the list of the eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection. As the resurrection-Kerygma in 1 Cor 15.4-8 presupposes the cross-event, it is difficult to criticise the report as referring to a trans-historical or non-historical resurrection.

resurrection."[78] Although the meaning of the resurrection can be elicited from the historical resurrection of Jesus, the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus as an individual should not be rejected.

Although the words *anastasis* and *egeiro* were used to describe both Jesus' resurrection and the minjung revolt, it is fallacious to identify Jesus' resurrection with the minjung revolt. Suh maintains that the words *anastasis* and *egeiro* were used in Mt 24.7, Lk 4.29, 21.10, 23.1 for minjung revolt. But in Mt 24.7 and Lk 4.29 it is a nation that rises against a nation in the sense that a nation starts a war against another nation. In Lk 4.29 it is the people in Jesus' hometown, i.e., those who were in the synagogue, who became enraged at the words of Jesus and they rose up to kill him. If we follow Suh's argument here, Jesus himself should become the target against whom the minjung rose up. In Lk 23.1 it is reported that the members of the Sanhedrin, i.e., the elders of the people, the chief priests, and the scribes rose to deliver Jesus over to the hands of Pilate for prosecution. It is obvious that these verses do not report the rising up of the minjung against the oppressive power.

Insofar as the historicity of Jesus' resurrection is assumed, the resurrection is the event in which Jesus as an individual rose from the dead. Minjung theologians seem to confuse the historical event and its significance. If we identify Jesus' resurrection with the minjung revolt, the resurrection of the individual Jesus becomes completely dehistoricised.[79] Although the minjung may have been encouraged to rise up by their experience of the cross, the minjung revolt cannot be equated with Jesus' resurrection itself. This is simply a false projection of the minjung theologians. If the resurrection of Jesus as a historical event is perceived as the minjung revolt, the historical resurrection-event of Jesus becomes dehistoricised into the ideology or symbol of the minjung. Minjung theologians criticise the Christ-Kerygma of the early church for dehistoricising Jesus' resurrection, but they can be criticised in turn for dehistoricising the historical event of Jesus' resurrection.

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[78] B. Ahn, "The Body of Jesus-Event Tradition," (in Korean) p.304.

[79] S. Park, "National Unification and Problems of Minjung Theology," p.73.

II.3. Conclusion

We have demonstrated that the perception of Jesus as a collective symbol of the minjung cannot be supported by the biblical data. There exists the possibility that Jesus, by using the title Son of Man for self-designation, understood himself as the corporate representative of the people of God. However, the description of the one "like a son of man" in Dan 7 and Jesus' use of the title in the Gospels do not support the argument of the minjung theologians. Jesus as the Son of Man claimed himself to be a kingly and divine figure, rather than the personification or the collective symbol of the minjung. Jesus' death and resurrection as the Son of Man also do not support the interpretation of Jesus as a collective symbol. Jesus makes it clear that he dies for "the many". Although his status as the Son of Man is the divine, royal figure who has cosmic lordship, his mission on earth is not to be served, but to serve, and to offer his life as a ransom for the people of God. The interpretation of Jesus' death and resurrection as the death and resurrection of the collective minjung cannot stand. Jesus' death represents the *mokmin* spirit *par excellence.*

III. Jesus and Messiahship

III.1. Perception of Jesus' Messiahship in Minjung Theology

Minjung theologians agree that the messiahship of Jesus must be described in relation to the minjung. Yong-Bock Kim differentiates the political messianism from the messianic politics of Jesus.[80] The messianic politics of Jesus help to realise the historical subjecthood of the minjung, for messianic politics exclude the role of the leader, especially that of the ruling power, and admits only the role of the minjung. This minjung-oriented description of the Messiah dictates the way the minjung theologians describe the Messiahship of Jesus. Kim states that:

> To be sure, there are many images or models in the Bible which will help to illuminate this notion of messianic politics. For instance, there is the model of King David; there is the figure of the Son of Man in apocalyptic literature; and other kingly (the anointed) images of the Messiah. However, these have a corrupting influence, for we see the Messiah as a power personality (political messianism) who embodies self-righteousness and triumphalism. However, the most appropriate and convincing of all messianic

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[80] Y. Kim, "Messiah and Minjung," p. 191.

> images is that of Jesus as the Suffering Servant, in the light of which we must examine and reshape other images like that of David, Son of Man, etc. What is noteworthy about the figure of the Suffering Servant is that it provides the two messianic qualities of identification with the suffering people and functioning as servant to the aspiration of the people for liberation.[81]

Kim does not explain on what biblical grounds he comes to perceive the traditional images of the Messiah in the Bible as a power personality who embodies self-righteousness and triumphalism. Neither does he discuss the biblical passages in the New Testament where he obtained the concept of the Suffering Servant. Referring to King David, the Son of Man in apocalyptic literature, and other kingly images of the Messiah as examples of messianic politics, Kim implicitly argues that Jesus' messianic status has nothing to do with those messianic images. As the title "Suffering Servant" is not used in the New Testament in relation to Jesus' status, it is difficult to prove or disprove Kim's argument on the basis of the biblical data. He does not explain how Jesus as the Suffering Servant identified himself with the suffering people or how he functioned as a servant fulfilling the aspiration of the people for liberation. It is therefore not easy to discuss Jesus' messianic function using the Suffering Servant image. However, we can examine whether other images of the Messiah embody self-righteousness and triumphalism and represent the political messianism that exerted corrupting influences.

Kim rejects any possibility that Jesus performed the messianic role for the minjung as their leader, arguing that Jesus-messianism or the messianic servanthood is a radical challenge to all forms of political, royal, and power messianism.[82] However, he immediately makes a remark that refutes his own argument:

"[Jesus-messianism] is concerned with saving and transforming the minjung so that its subjecthood may be realised. Hence, all powers must be under the rule of Jesus the Messiah, who came to be the Servant of the minjung, who died for them, and who rose from the dead so that the minjung may rise from the power of death historically and not just at the end of time."[83] This statement makes three points concerning Jesus:

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[81] *Ibid.*

[82] *Ibid.*, p. 187.

[83] *Ibid.*

First, the role of Jesus as the Messiah is to save and transform the minjung. Through his messianic work, the minjung will achieve their subjecthood. The salvation of the minjung is accomplished by Jesus the Messiah. Secondly, Kim makes it clear that Jesus' power and rule must be established over all political powers, so it will not be incorrect to describe Jesus-messianism as having a deep political significance. This observation is supported by Kim's own remark. The minjung who are to be saved and transformed by Jesus are those who are determined as minjung politically, so Jesus' messianic role for the minjung must carry political significance. Jesus is the supreme ruler and the servant at the same time.[84] Thirdly, Kim reveals his understanding of Jesus' death as a vicarious death.

Alongside Kim's views, we need to examine how Byung-Mu Ahn understands the Messiahship of Jesus. Ahn is adamant in asserting that Jesus did not have a messianic consciousness.[85] Therefore, according to Ahn, Jesus was not the Messiah. He argues:

> There were many messianic titles used about Jesus such as Christ, Son of God, Son of Man, Son of David, and Lord, etc. Jesus' use of the title Son of Man for self-designation does not carry any messianic implication. . . If Jesus had the self-understanding as the Messiah, we should deny that he was a true Messiah. Seeing his activity, we can say that Jesus did not attempt to fit himself into the traditional image of the Messiah, for the life of Jesus as described in the Gospels does not correspond to any contemporary images of the Messiah. . . Jesus applied the title Son of God not only to himself but also to the whole humanity. Above all, Jesus called God as Father of the people. Though some Western scholars hold that Jesus disclosed his unique sonship of God by addressing him as 'my Father', it is hardly acceptable. We need to be reminded that Jesus addressed God as 'our Father' in the Lord's Prayer (cf. Mt 6.9). In any way, it seems to be true that Jesus did not perform the miracles with the self-consciousness as the Son of God. . . Then, how can we characterise the life of Jesus as the Christ?[86]

In this quotation we can easily detect a lack of consistency. First, while admitting the Son of Man as one of the messianic titles, Ahn contradicts himself by arguing that Jesus' use of the Son of Man for self-designation does not carry messianic implications. If Jesus used the Son of Man title, which was one of the messianic titles, as a self-designation, it is proper to acknowledge that Jesus intended to disclose a

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[84] Here it must be pointed out that, though Jesus came with the mission to serve the people, Jesus' status was not the servant of the minjung, but the servant of Yahweh.

[85] Ahn, *A Story of Minjung Theology*, p. 97.

[86] *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

significant aspect both of his identity and his mission.[87] Secondly, it is interesting to note that in the last line of the quotation, Ahn identifies Jesus as the Christ, i.e., the Messiah, even after he has denied the messiahship of Jesus.

It is obvious that in minjung theology the Messiahship of Jesus is denied. However, it is also observed that minjung theologians present conflicting views on Jesus' Messiahship, which reflect their careless treatment of the biblical materials. Thus it is necessary to examine how Jesus' messiahship is presented in the Gospels.

III.2. Jesus and the Messianic Images in the Bible

Jesus and the Son of Man

Jesus' identity as a royal figure is testified in the Son of Man sayings in the Gospels. It is in the Son of Man sayings that refer to his coming at the end time that Jesus' status as the kingly figure is disclosed. He revealed to his disciples that in the end time the Son of Man will come in his glory and gather the elect from all corners of the earth (Mt 25; Mk 8.38; 13.26). In the pericope of Mt 25.31-46, the Son of Man is already enthroned as a king (v.40) and comes as a judge of the nations.[88] In Mk 14.61-62, when the high priest questions Jesus about his messianic identity, Jesus answers in the

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[87] The reason for Jesus' exclusive use of this title for self-designation is explained in this way: the title the Son of Man was the most appropriate title to disclose his Messiahship avoiding the possible misunderstanding of the people concerning Jesus' identity as political liberator. S. Kim, *op cit.*, p. 100, argues that, if Jesus himself used such titles as Son of God, Son of David, or Messiah that have historically-charged meaning of political liberator, he would have ignited the people's aspiration for political liberation, i.e., the popular messianism. The title Son of Man was the most appropriate title to express his conception of Messiahship without endorsing the popular expectation of a political messiah. Kim holds that the unusual and puzzling self-designation of Jesus as the Son of Man was to reveal his true identity to those who have ears to hear and to hide from those who do not have ears to hear. In this respect, Kim sees that Jesus' use of this title is linked with the messianic secret. However, Kim seems to contradict himself by arguing that there existed a Son of Man messianism. Following J. A. Fitzmyer's interpretation on 4QpsDan Aa (= 4Q 243), Kim takes this text as referring to the heavenly figure 'like a son of man' in Dan. 7.13 as the Son of God, admitting the possibility that the Danielic figure 'like a son of man' may have been interpreted as a messianic figure. He further argues that, if Fitzmyer is right in his conjecture that the words of the text are addressed to a Davidic king, the text may be interpreting Dan. 7.13 in terms of the tradition of 2 Sam 7.12ff. and the heavenly figure "like a son of man" in terms of the messiah, the end-time Davidic king who is to be made God's son. Kim, *ibid.*, p. 22. If there already existed a Son of Man messianism, Jesus would not be able to achieve his intention to disclose his Messiahship without instigating the popular messianism. This seems to contradict Kim's earlier argument.

[88] N. Suh, who emphasises the minjung status of Jesus on the basis of this passage whereby Jesus is perceived to have identified with the minjung, seems to ignore the reference to Jesus as the enthroned king.

affirmative and further reveals his coming as the Son of Man: "You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mk 14.62).[89] In Mk 10.45a, by saying that he came as the Son of Man, Jesus discloses his understanding of himself as the royal and divine messenger from God. In this regard, it is noteworthy that with the *elthon*-sayings in the Gospels Jesus repeatedly discloses his divine origin and the special task with which he was sent. The *elthon*-sayings express Jesus' self-consciousness of his divine commission. Jesus presents himself as God's messenger commissioned with a God-given task.[90]

Jesus and the Son of David

It is difficult to prove whether Jesus had understood himself as the Son of David. Minjung theologians interpret Mk 12.35-37 as concrete evidence that Jesus denied his status as the Son of David. However, we find several instances in which Jesus, who was addressed by sick people as the Son of David, endorsed their use of the title by healing them, thus indirectly confirming his status as the Son of David.

a) Biblical References

Mt 9.27-31: Jesus was accosted by two blind men who cried out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" (v. 27). Jesus endorsed the validity of their using the Son of David title by performing the healing miracle. The Pharisees instantly showed antagonism by saying that Jesus was casting out demons using the power of the rulers of the demons (v. 34). This hostile opposition from the Pharisees seems to have been provoked not

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[89] Concerning the historicity of this logion, there are three views: First, it reflects the authentic saying of Jesus; secondly, it is Mark's editing of the tradition; and thirdly, it is the creation of the early church. Whether it was Mark's editing or the creation of the early church, it does not make any difference in our presentation of Jesus' status as a royal figure, for both Mark and the early church perceive Jesus as a royal figure. If it reflects the authentic saying of Jesus, then it serves as an evidence for Jesus' self-understanding as the royal and divine figure. The symbolic language of sitting at the right hand of God unmistakably indicates someone who rules as a king. His appearance, accompanied by the clouds, indicates that he is a divine figure. It is thus affirmed that Jesus is pictured as the divine and kingly figure who will participate in the cosmic lordship of God.

Not only does Jesus designate himself as the apocalyptic Son of Man in a proleptic sense, he also emphasises that the Son of Man has actually come. See also Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1962), p. 93. He also explains the coming of the Son of Man in terms of the already-and-not-yet formula as similarly observed in the coming of the Kingdom. Cf. his *Studies in Scripture and its Authority*, p. 103.

[90] Kim, *op cit.*, p. 42.

because of Jesus' healing activity *per se* but because of his validation of the popular perception of him as the Son of David.

Mt 12.22-32/ Mk 3.19b-30/ Lk 11.14-23. A demon-possessed man was brought to Jesus and Jesus healed him. The crowds were amazed and inquired, "Can this be the Son of David?" (Mt 12.23). In the contemporary Jewish socio-political situation, it would be quite natural that the miraculous deeds of Jesus could prompt the crowd to raise the question concerning his identity. But, when the Pharisees hear what the people say about Jesus' identity, they attribute the source of Jesus' miraculous deeds to the rulers of the demons. However, Jesus refutes the Pharisees' interpretation of his deeds, which was intended to discourage the people from taking Jesus as the Davidic-Messiah. By doing so, Jesus was actually validating the perception of the people. Jesus makes it clear that his exorcistic activity is connected with the coming of the kingdom of God (Mt 12.28/ Lk 11.20), thus indicating that he was the Davidic-Messiah King.

Mt 20.29-34/ Mk 10.46-52/ Lk 18.35-43. As Jesus and his disciples are leaving Jericho, a blind beggar Bartimaeus cries out for help twice, calling Jesus as the Son of David: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Mk 10.47, 48). Although the crowd following Jesus try to silence him, Jesus responds to his repeated cries and heals him. By responding to the blind beggar's call for help, Jesus again discreetly endorsed the poor man's understanding of Jesus as the Son of David. As Jesus does not forbid the use of the title, but endorses its use by healing Bartimaeus and allowing him to be a follower, he actually opens up the possibility to the public of believing him as the Son of David.

Mt 21.9/ Mk 11.9-10/ Lk 19.38/ Jn 12.13. The Evangelists report that the crowds hailed Jesus as the Davidic-Messiah as Jesus entered Jerusalem. Here it is noteworthy that Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a colt. In reporting this, Mark indicates that Jesus is the Davidic king described in Zechariah 9.9. The king who comes riding on a colt is a humble king, but he is also described as a triumphant and victorious king. For the public acclamation of Jesus, Matthew explicitly uses the title Son of David, whereas Luke and John use "the King" and "the King of Israel" respectively, referring to the royal messiah.[91] B. Ahn contrasts the reports in Matthew and Luke with that of Mark

and accepts the latter account, arguing that Mark simply assumes that Jesus is from Galilee.[92] Ahn refers only to the second part of the shouts of the people, asserting that the public welcome in Mark had nothing to do with Jesus' identity. But the first part of the shout clearly describes Jesus as "the one who comes in the name of the Lord" (Mk 11.9b), and there is no hint given in the pericope suggesting that Mark assumed Jesus' status as a Galilean. It is true that Mark does not use the Messianic designation in an explicit way, but he clearly indicates that Jesus, who comes in the name of the Lord, has something to do with "the coming of the kingdom of our father David" (Mk 11.10).

Mt 21.15-16. According to the Gospel of Matthew, the Jewish religious leaders become indignant when they saw the wonderful things that Jesus did and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Mt 21.15). Instead of repudiating the children's cry, Jesus affirms it (v. 16).

Mk 12.35-37/ Mt 22.41-46/ Lk 20.41-44. Byung-Mu Ahn maintains that this pericope is important in that it reports the definite denial of Jesus' status as the Son of David. However, most scholars do not support Ahn's view. Jesus' own question itself is not interpreted as indicating his denial as the Son of David. Mark, who reports other occasions where Jesus did not forbid the use of the title 'Son of David' by the people, could not have thought that this question represents the denial of Jesus' status as the Son of David.[93] It is significant that both Matthew and Luke, who traced the descent of Jesus from David, report the story. It is evident that Matthew and Luke saw no problem in including this story, which suggests that they did not understand this passage as a denial of Jesus' status as the Son of David but as an affirmation of his status as more than the Son of David.[94]

In summing up, Jesus did not deny his status as the Davidic Messiah. He did not claim that he represented the image of the Davidic Messiah, but corrected the popular

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[91] *Contra* Donald J. Verseput who holds that only in Matthew was the royal messianic designation used. See his, "The role and meaning of the 'Son of God' title in Matthew's Gospel," *NTS* 33 (1987), p. 536.

[92] B. Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 19.

[93] Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel according to Mark* (London: A & C Black, 1991), p. 292.

[94] *Ibid.*

messianic image of the Davidic Messiah. The truth of the matter is that Jesus acknowledged his status as the Davidic Messiah but his definition of the Messiah was different from the image in popular messianism. This observation implies that, insofar as Jesus did not deny his status as the Davidic Messiah, Jesus embodies the image of the Davidic Messiah. If so, it is necessary to trace the image of the Davidic Messiah which the people of Israel expected to come.

b) The Image of the Davidic Messiah

The Messiah as the Son of David has a long history in the life of the people of Israel. The first promise of the eternal reign of Davidic king is given to David through Nathan's oracle (2 Sam 7.12-16). The kings of Israel failed to represent the reign of God. In contrast to the unjust and sinful kings of Israel, the prophets began to express hope for the king who will truly represent the reign of God and establish his kingdom. They depicted this ideal king in the line of David. Our concern here is to trace the expectation associated with the image of the Davidic Messiah in the Old Testament and in the *Psalms of Solomon*.

Isa 9.6-7. The righteous reign of the coming king is portrayed as the throne of David and his kingdom. The nature of his reign will be justice and righteousness: "He shall establish and uphold it with justice and righteousness" (v. 7). In Isaiah 5.7-8, the Lord rebukes the people of Judah for failing to establish justice and righteousness in their community. The injustice and unrighteousness of the people of Judah is described as socio-economic injustice as the rich and powerful aristocracy absorbed the small holdings of the peasants into their latifundia (Isa 5.8). When the justice and righteousness of the Lord is executed, "the lambs shall graze as in their pasture, fatlings and kids shall feed among the ruins" (Isa 5.17). The expected Davidic king is the one who will execute justice and righteousness for the poor and the powerless.

Ezek 34.23-24. Here the Davidic Messiah is described with the image of a shepherd. The Davidic Messiah is the servant of God, and acts as the earthly representative of God. The function of the Davidic Messiah is to feed the people. The messianic shepherd will establish the covenant of peace (Ezek 34.25). In Ezek 37.24, the future king who will rule the people of God is the Davidic king, and he will emerge as a shepherd of the people. This is the most vivid portrayal among the OT images of the Davidic Messiah as embodying the *mokmin* spirit.

Psalms of Solomon. The author of Ps Sol prays that a deliverer will be sent to save Israel from pagan domination (8.27f., 30). He expects that with his coming the scattered people of Israel will be gathered again (11; 17.31; 44. cf. Isa 66.18ff; Eccles 36.10). The coming ruler of new age whom the people of Israel expected is none other than the Son of David: "Behold, O Lord, and raise up for them their king, the son of David. Against the time which thou, O God, choosest, for him to begin his reign over Israel thy servant. . . He is mighty in his deeds and strong in the fear of God, shepherding the flock of the Lord faithfully and righteously. And he will let none among them faint in their pasture. With equity he will lead them all, and there will be no arrogance among them that any among them should be oppressed."[95] Here the king of Israel, the son of David, whom God will raise up is described in shepherd imagery. His mission as the shepherd-king is to make sure that justice and equity will be established to prevent none of God's flock from fainting. His reign over Israel is characterised by faithfulness, righteousness and equity. He removes any form of oppression within the community. The Davidic shepherd-king does not appear to rule of his own accord, but is strong in the fear of God.

To sum up, the image of the Davidic Messiah whom the people of Israel expected to come is the king who will establish justice and righteousness in the community of Israel. Although most kings of Israel from Solomon to the exile failed to execute justice and righteousness, the ideal king described as the Davidic Messiah is the one who will feed the people as their shepherd. The Davidic Messiah then in Israelite messianism cannot be said to be "a power personality who embodies self-righteousness and triumphalism." On the contrary, the Davidic Messiah is the ideal king who fears the Lord and truly embodies the *mokmin* spirit.

c) Jesus as the Davidic Messiah (Mt 11.3/ Lk 7.18)

It is in his response to the question of John the Baptist that Jesus' identity as the Messiah and his understanding of the nature of messianic mission are clearly disclosed, and we will focus our discussion on Mt 11.2-19/ Lk 7.18-35. This pericope recording the indirect dialogue between Jesus and John not only exposes the discrepancy

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[95] *Psalms of Solomon* 17.45.

between what John expected and what Jesus did, but brings to light a significant aspect of Jesus' identity.

The Nature of John's Question. After having heard in prison what Jesus was doing, John sent his disciples to Jesus and asked: "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"[96] It is clearly a question about Jesus' identity. John became doubtful about the identity of Jesus as the expected one, i.e., the Messiah,[97] because of Jesus' deeds.[98] This is a quite straightforward question from John and Jesus may have taken his question seriously, unlike the questions raised by other religious leaders. This question reveals that, before John heard about what Jesus was doing, he thought of Jesus as the Coming One, for there is no reason for him to question Jesus if he did not so regard him. The second part of the question, "Are we to wait another one?" well

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[96] Boers, *op. cit.*, p. 43, argues that this question is the creation of the early Christians, for it reflects the Christian understanding of John as the forerunner of Jesus. It goes beyond our present study to discuss the question whether the Synoptic references to John the Baptist are the creation of the early Church in order to relativize the authority of John. However, it must be pointed out that he makes rather contradictory observations in support of his argument that this question is a Christian formulation. He observes that the present form of the story assumes that both John and Jesus know exactly what John is asking, to which Jesus indirectly answers. He also argues that, in the actual historical situation in which John began wondering about Jesus identity, it is not imaginable that John could have such an understanding about Jesus identity. There seems to be no hint given in the story that will enable us to find an assumption that both John and Jesus had the same understanding about Jesus' identity. Rather the story presents the gap between John's understanding and that of Jesus concerning the coming one. This is the reason why Jesus admonishes his audience not to be scandalised by him, alluding to the fact that, like John, there will be people who will be scandalised by Jesus because he does not fit into their image of the coming one.

[97] The expression 'the coming one' was not a fixed title, but we may ask whom the coming one designates in the history of Israel. There is no hint given in the immediate context, but we can find the clue in the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman recorded in Jn 4.25-26. At the end of their long conversation (4.7-26) the Samaritan woman says, I know that Messiah *is coming* (he who is called a Christ); when he *comes*, he will show us all things (v. 25). The one whom the people expected to come is none other than the Messiah. To this, Jesus reveals that he is the very Messiah whom the people of Israel had expected to come.

[98] *Contra* James Kallas, *The Significance of the Synoptic Miracles* (London: SPCK, 1961), p. 85. He observes that the reason John asks about Jesus' identity was because he heard about Jesus' deeds. According to Kallas, instead of being scandalised by hearing Jesus' deeds, John recognises in Jesus' deeds the confirmation of what he expected. Kallas holds that both John and Jesus worked with the basic understanding of the nature of the kingdom in that the kingdom meant the final destruction of satanic rule. Thus when John hears of the deeds of Jesus, of the attack on the powers of evil, he seeks confirmation of what he believes, that Jesus is truly the one to break down the domain of Satan [85]. But his interpretation can be criticised as arbitrary. First, John himself betrayed a strong doubt about the identity of Jesus by adding in his question, "Are we to wait another one?" (Mt 11.3). Secondly, Jesus' remark, "Anyone who takes no offence at me is blessed" (Mt 11.6), clearly indicates that John himself was wondering about Jesus' identity on the basis of Jesus' activities.

expresses this attitude toward Jesus. John and his disciples noticed something radically different in Jesus' deeds from the image that they associated with the Coming One. Thus they came to have doubts about Jesus' identity.

Jesus' Answer. Jesus responds by citing Isa 29.18-19; 35.5-6; 61.1: "the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them" (Mt 11.5). And he adds, "Blessed is he who is not scandalised by me" (v. 6). In his answer, Jesus confirms unequivocally, though in an indirect way, that he is the Coming One.[99] Behind this additional remark of Jesus on the blessedness of those not scandalised by him lies the assumption that he is the Coming One, though people may have doubts about his identity. It is also assumed that there are certainly people who will be scandalised by Jesus. It is the discrepancy between the image of Messiah and Jesus' unmessianic deeds that causes people to take offence at Jesus. What Jesus is saying in effect is that those who do not lose the belief in Jesus' identity as the Coming One, i.e., as the Messiah, are blessed.

The Nature of Jesus' Messianic Mission. As Jesus' answer refers to the miracles that he was actually performing at that time, he presents his deeds of compassion for the sick as the evidence that he is the Messiah-king, i.e., the agent of God's reign. What is significant about Jesus' healing ministry is that it is closely linked with the Kingdom of God.[100] Stephen C. Mott notes that, to the Hebrews, physical healing is not separated from economic and political deliverance.[101] It is the consistent testimony of the Old Testament that physical healing is an essential aspect of God's reign.[102] In this regard,

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[99] *Contra* A. Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity*, p. 121.

[100] The ministry of Jesus is characterised by Matthew as teaching in the synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness (Mt 4.23; 9.35).

[101] Stephen C. Mott, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 93.

[102] In Psalm 146, the nature of God's reign is described as follows: executing justice for the oppressed, giving food to the hungry, setting the prisoners free, opening of the eyes of the blind, lifting up those who are bowed down, watching over the strangers, upholding the orphan and the widow, and bringing the way of the wicked to ruin (Ps 146.7-9). Here we see that physical healing goes hand in hand with the execution of social justice.

it seems significant that Matthew, by quoting Isa 42.1-4, interprets Jesus' healing miracles as the fulfilment of the prophecy that the *ebed Yahweh* will establish justice (Mt 12.18-21). In Mal 4.2, healing is explicitly linked with justice: "But for you who revere my name the sun of *justice* will rise, with *healing* in its wings." In the context of Isa 35, the healing of the sick is described as an integral part of Israel's eschatological restoration.[103] The picture language of healing the sick is described as the content of God's coming and his salvation (Isa 35.4). We may find evidence of linking the physical healing with the kingdom of God in the words of Jesus. After healing a demon-possessed man, Jesus argues that it signifies the arrival of the kingdom of God: "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Mt 12.28).

In his answer to John, Jesus affirms that his healing ministry, which is the concrete manifestation of establishing justice, is not only the evidence of his messianic identity but the content of the messianic reign. This understanding of the content of the messianic mission is again confirmed in the next pericope where Jesus mentions the mission of John the Baptist.

The Way of the Lord. After answering John's inquiry, Jesus refers to the mission of John the Baptist as his herald. Most scholars interpret the nature of John's mission, focusing on his role as the herald of Jesus, overlooking the importance of his mission in providing a clue to illuminating Jesus' identity and mission. John is described as a voice crying in the wilderness, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah. This mission of preparing the way for the Lord describes what John does for Jesus. John's mission as herald of Jesus discloses an essential aspect of Jesus' identity and the nature of his ministry. First of all, we will need to examine the Old Testament quotation in its own context to illuminate what the way of the Lord means in Isaiah.

Before the coming of the Lord with might (Isa 40.10), a voice is heard calling people to prepare the way of the coming God in the wilderness (vv. 3-4). God's way is in the wilderness. This reminds us of the Exodus event in the wilderness.[104] However,

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[103] G. Lohfink, *Jesus and Community: The Social Dimension of Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), p. 13.

it does not seem to refer to the actual desert in the context of Isaiah. The coming of God is compared to the coming of rain or snow from heaven (Isa 44.3, 45.8, 55.10) or to the opening of springs (Isa 35.6, 41.18, 43.19, 48.21, 49.10) which will transform the desert or wilderness, presently unfit for habitation, into a land of fruitfulness (Isa 51.3-12). The desert is a representation of the very life of a scattered people of Israel and of the world. God is coming into their midst. The coming of God expressed through the image of a new Exodus seems to refer both to the liberation of Israel from the Babylonian exiles and to the eschatological hope of the future reign of God. The focus in v. 10 is on the coming of God himself and on the power that will establish his reign.

One of the tasks in preparing the way of the Lord is expressed in the picture language of bringing down the mountains and hills (Isa 40.4). The image of high things being brought low suggests the humbling of the oppressive arrogance of both individuals and social institutions in the face of God's sovereignty (Isa 2.6-22). The other task is to lift up every valley. Since valleys are the opposite of the mountains and hills, the prophet seems to refer to those people living in hopelessness and despair. Those who live in this situation are in the valley of deep shadow (Ps 71.20), a sort of living death (Isa 29.4).[105] The imagery of lifting up the valleys then probably means the restoration or raising of the humbled and oppressed.[106] Thus, the nature of God's ways is pictured as the restoration of justice which is the vindication by God of those who cannot themselves secure their own rights.[107]

Jesus and the Son of God

Jesus was conscious of his identity as the son of God and claimed his sonship of God in public (Mk 13.32/ Mt 24.36; Mt 11.27/ Lk 10.22; Mk 12.6/Lk 20.13/ Mt 21.37). By

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[104] The idea found in v. 2 that Jerusalem served its exilic sentence and paid its penalty seems to mirror what Israel suffered in Egypt before their liberation. First, God intervened at the point when the suffering of Israel reached its limit. Secondly, vv. 3-5 describes the situation after suffering by using the Exodus image. The term translated into service means a period of service, whether military or forced labour, which recalls Israel's forced labour in Egypt.

[105] E. John Hamlin, *A Guide to Isaiah 40-66* (London: SPCK, 1979), p. 11.

[106] Also Gnana Robinson, "Mission in Christ's Way – Siding with the Poor," *AJT* 1:1 (1987), p. 98. He maintains that the image of levelling refers to socio-economic levelling in society.

[107] Norman H. Snaith, *Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (London: Epworth Press, 1944), p. 70.

calling God Father, Jesus explicitly claimed his divine sonship.[108] Although Jesus never used the expression "Son of God" as a title for self-designation, he acquiesced the use of "the Son of God" as a title by others.[109]

Jesus' Baptism (Mk 1.9-11 *pars.*). The baptism of Jesus plays an important role in Jesus' self-understanding as the Son of God. When the representatives of the Sanhedrin raised a question of Jesus' authority after his act of cleansing the temple (Mk 11.15-19), Jesus replied by raising a counterquestion whether the baptism of John was from heaven or from men (Mk 11.30). Jesus' counterquestion, given in the form of an answer to the question on his authority,[110] is interpreted as Jesus deliberately intending to disclose his authority as the Son of God proclaimed at his baptism by John.[111] Mk 1.9-11 thus records Jesus' baptism and the heavenly announcement of Jesus' divine sonship.[112]

The Son of God as King of Israel. The voice from heaven announces: "Thou art my beloved Son, with thee I am well pleased" (v. 10). The first part of this announcement from heaven is generally held to have Psalm 2.7 as its background.[113] Psalm 2 describes

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[108] Mt 7.21; 10.32, 33; 11.27; 12.50; 15.13; 16.17; 18.10, 14, 19, 35; 20.23; 25.34; 26.29, 39, 42, 53. Lk 2.49; 22.29; 24.49

[109] When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, Satan addressed Jesus as the Son of God twice (Mt 4.3, 6 *par.*). The demons recognised Jesus as the Son of God (cf. Mk 3.11-12; Mk 5.7). Jesus also acknowledged Peter's confession of him as the Christ, the Son of the living God (Mk 8.27-30 *pars.*).

[110] Boers, *Who Was Jesus?*, p. 42, makes conflicting observations about the nature of Jesus counterquestion. On the one hand, he holds that this counterquestion is a way of avoiding an answer to their question. He observes that Jesus' counterquestion is to trick the questioners into providing him with an excuse for his avoiding an answer, for he obviously knew that they would not refuse to answer him. On the other hand, he states that it does provide an answer in that it informs the interrogators of the fact that they will find the answer to their question by answering the counterquestion. Hence Jesus' intention in responding with a counterquestion is to avoid a direct answer but to give an indirect, but obvious, answer to their interrogation.

[111] Seyoon Kim, "Baptism and Temptation of Jesus," *Essays on Jesus and Paul* (Seoul: Cham Mal Press, 1993), p. 23.

[112] J. D. Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel*, p. 64. James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 74, states that Jesus came to have the self-understanding both as the inaugurator and as the king of the kingdom of God through his baptism by John the Baptist.

[113] Jeremias holds that Mk 1.11 has only Isa 42.1 as its background. He argues that the term *pais*, not *huios*, was originally used in Mk 1.11. J. Jeremias, "παις θεου" *TDNT* 5:701. Jeremias notes that Mt

the enthronement of a king, and announces that the person who is enthroned as king of Israel will become the son of God and exercise authority over the people of Israel and the nations. In particular, Ps 2.7 is God's decree concerning the enthronement of the king of Israel.[114] Ps 2.7 was understood to be linked to the tradition of Nathan's oracle that promised a future Davidic king. The first part of the heavenly voice therefore reveals Jesus' status as God's anointed king.[115] However, his kingship of Israel is understood in the context of his obedience to God as *ebed Yahweh*.[116]

The Nature of Jesus Kingship. John Howard Yoder observes that this heavenly proclamation of Jesus' divine sonship was given in history, in particular in Palestine.[117] He maintains that the announcement is not the definition or accreditation of a metaphysically defined sonship, but necessarily entails a concrete task in history to

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12.18 cites Isa 42.1 and keeps the term *pais*. According to Jeremias, the replacement of *pais* with *huios* was made for two reasons: first, *pais* was an offensive term in the Gentile churches, and second, the term *pais* could not express the full significance of the majesty of the glorified Lord. *Ibid.*, p. 703. So even the Hellenized Jewish Churches used *huios theou* instead of *pais theou*.

On the contrary, though not denying the possibility of Isa 42.1 in the background of Mk 1.11, Frank J. Matera, *The Kingship of Jesus* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), p. 78, argues that the primary background of the heavenly announcement given at the baptism and transfiguration of Jesus is the royal imagery of Ps 2.7. He observed three things to support his argument: first, the Hebrew word *ebed* in Isa 42.1 was used 807 times in the Hebrew text and was translated in LXX as *pais* only once in Deut 32.43. Cf. I. H. Marshall, "Son of God or Servant of Yahweh? - A Reconsideration of Mark I.11," *NTS* 15 (1969), p. 329. Then it becomes strange to replace *pais*, the word originally used, with *huios*. Secondly, the expression *ho agapetos* is not used in any Greek translation of Isa 42.1. Matera, *ibid*, p. 76. Thirdly, *en soi eudokesa* in Mk 1.11b, probably alluding to 2 Sam. 22.20, connected only with the royal, Davidic imagery. In 2 Sam. 22.20 David describes that God saved him because [God] delighted in [him]. Matera concludes that the background of Mk 1.11 is exclusively Ps. 2.7.

However, though acknowledging the validity of Matera's observation about the use of *huios*, the other points are not easily acceptable. The expression *ho agapetos* does not appear in Ps. 2.7, either. The phrase *en soi eudokesa* could have come directly from the Hebrew text of Isa 42.1, without following its Greek translation in LXX. Then it is inappropriate to argue that Mk 1.11b did not come from Isa 42.1 on the basis of the fact that Mk 1.11b did not copy the Greek translation of Isa 42.1 in LXX. Moreover, the reference to the pouring of God's spirit in Isa 42.1 seems to be related to the coming of the Holy Spirit in Mk 1.10, which heightens the possibility that v. 11b has Isa 42.1 as its background. Thus it is most appropriate to see that Mk 1.11 has both Ps. 2.7 and Isa 42.1 as its background. Cf. Edward Schweizer, *The Good News according to Mark: a commentary on the Gospel*. Trans. By Donald H. Madvig (London: SPCK, 1971), p. 37.

[114] J. D. Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel*, p. 66.

[115] Paul J. Achtemeier, *Mark*. Proclamation Commentaries (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 55.

[116] Cf. James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, p. 75.

[117] John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: vicit agnus noster* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 24.

which Jesus is summoned to fulfil.[118] Although the concrete manifestation of Jesus' kingly status should be observed in his practice, the clue to grasp the nature of his kingship is given in the proclamation itself.

The second part of the heavenly proclamation is a citation of Isa 42.1. Isa 42.1 is the beginning of the section known as "Songs of the Servant of Yahweh" (Isa 42.1-9; 49.1-6; 50.4-9; 52.13-53.12) and records the scene in which God delights in his chosen servant, equips him with his spirit and commissions him a new task. In the immediate context of Isa 42.1-4, the mission of the Servant of Yahweh is referred to three times as the establishment of justice (vv. 1, 3, 4). The implications of this mission of establishing justice are stated in Isa 42.6-7 in terms of "opening the eyes that are blind and liberating the prisoners from the dungeon, those who sit in darkness from the prison." Jesus' mission as the Servant of Yahweh is also primarily to establish justice. By actually performing the healing miracles following his baptism, Jesus confirmed that he was accomplishing the mission of the Servant of Yahweh.

At any rate, the Evangelists report that Jesus was announced as the Son of God at his baptism. In the tradition of Israel, the kings were announced as the Son of God at their enthronement. Jesus disclosed his awareness of his divine sonship by alluding to the baptism of John in his counterquestion to the Jewish religious leaders after the event of the temple cleansing. Jesus clearly indicates that he understood himself as the king of Israel. But, his kingship is to be understood within the framework of his mission as the Servant of Yahweh. Jesus as the Son of God does not emerge as a triumphant political king who saves Israel from her national predicament, but presents himself as the one who establishes justice, the manifestation of which is his healing of the sick and the releasing of the oppressed.

The Transfiguration (Mk 9.2-13/ Mt 17.1-13/ Lk 9.28-36). A similar proclamation concerning Jesus' identity is given to the inner circle of the disciples, who become terrified after Jesus' transfiguration. When they saw the transfiguration of Jesus, the disciples suggested making tents for Jesus, Moses and Elijah individually. Instead of getting an answer from Jesus, they hear a voice from the cloud announcing: "This is my beloved Son, listen to him" (Mk 9.7). Jesus orders his disciples to tell no one about

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[118] *Ibid.*

what they had seen until after his death and resurrection (v. 9). Jesus' disciples question him about the meaning of rising from the dead, but not about the meaning of the heavenly announcement, which indicates that they understood its significance. The subsequent dispute about the greatest among the disciples (Mk 9.33-37), the request of James and John for privileged positions in Jesus' glory (Mk 10.37), and the reaction of ten other disciples who become indignant about James and John (10.41) indicate that Jesus' disciples understood the heavenly announcement as confirming the enthronement of Jesus as a political king who would rule over Israel as God's representative.

Although Jesus never endorsed the popular expectation associated with this royal status of the Son of God, he consistently presented himself as royal figure who was to rule the nations. It therefore seems significant that, when James and John ask Jesus to allow them to sit on his right and left side respectively, Jesus corrects their false understanding of the nature of his kingship, but not denying his own kingly authority. By making it clear that privileged positions in his reign will be granted to those for whom they are prepared, Jesus expressly affirms his royal status. Because the nature of Jesus' kingly authority could be fully grasped only after his rising from the dead (Mk 9.9-13), Jesus warns his disciples not to divulge what they have seen, thus preventing possible misunderstanding about the nature of his royal status. At the same time, Jesus' warning to his disciples indicates that the nature of his kingship is different from the image that the people associated with the kingly figure Son of God, for his mission as the Son of God was to suffer death.

The Trial of Jesus (Mk 14.53-15.5). From the beginning of Jesus ministry, the question of his identity was inevitably prompted not only by his verbal proclamation of the kingdom of God but also by his deeds (cf. Mt 11.3/ Lk 7.19-20).[119] All the public disputes concerning Jesus' identity seem to reach a climax at the question of the high priest and the answer of Jesus. Although there have been various explanations of the

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[119] Ben F. Meyer, "Jesus' Ministry and Self-Understanding," in *Studying the Historical Jesus: evaluation of the state of current research.*, ed. By B. Chilton and C. Evans (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), p. 345; J. D. Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel*, p. 80-85. The people's curiosity about Jesus' identity is expressed repeatedly in the Gospels. Cf. Mk 4.41 *pars*; 6.2 *pars*; 6.14-16 *pars*; 8.27-30 *pars*; 14.61 *pars*; 15.2 *pars*; 15.39 *pars*; Lk 7.16-17; Jn 7.12, 15, 40-41; 8.54; 10.19-21, 24.

cause of Jesus' death,[120] no objection is raised about the historicity of the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was arrested, tried, sentenced, and executed by the Romans[121] If this is so, the reports on the trial can provide us with important information concerning the historical Jesus, for the process of the trial and the charges brought against Jesus will expose significant information on the identity of Jesus. As the Evangelists agree in reporting that Jesus was tried both before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate, we need to examine the two trials in some detail.[122]

i) *Jesus' Trial at Sanhedrin* (Mk 14.53-65 *pars.*).[123] After being arrested (Mk 14.43-50), Jesus is taken to the house of the high priest Caiaphas, where all the chief

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[120] Scholars have disputed whether it was the religious charges that caused Jesus death or political charges. Our study will not deal with this issue, but we are interested in illuminating the self-understanding of Jesus as disclosed in the proceedings of the two trials. For the dispute concerning the cause of Jesus death, see Richard A. Horsley, "The Death of Jesus," in *Studying the Historical Jesus*, pp. 395-422.

[121] F. F. Bruce, "The Trial of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel," in *Gospel Perspectives. Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels* Vol. 1, ed. by R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 7-20, argues that the trial narratives as reported by John have theological and historical validity. He emphasises the fact that, though the story of Jesus trial includes the theological reflection and exposition of John, it was to bring out the permanent and universal relevance of the historical events that he records. According to Bruce, John presents the trial and execution of Jesus, as he presents everything else in his record, in such a way as to enforce his theological *Leitmotiv*. . . . But the events which he presents in this way, and pre-eminently the events of the passion, are *real, historical events.*

[122] John records that Jesus was first taken to Annas after the arrest (Jn 18.13). John records the inquiry conducted by the high priest Annas who just questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. F. F. Bruce, *ibid.*, p. 10, observes that, because John already knew that Caiaphas was the high priest that year (Jn 18.13), he meant that Annas was the high priest emeritus when he referred to him as a high priest. After the seemingly unproductive inquiry, Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas (Jn 18.24). John clearly reports that it was from the house of Caiaphas that Jesus was sent to Pilate's headquarters (Jn 18.28). John does not report the proceedings of the trial before Caiaphas (Mk 14.53-65/ Mt 26.57-68/ Lk 22.66-71), but hints at the fact that at least one thing was determined at the trial before Caiaphas: the charge against Jesus brought to Pilate, i.e., the charge that Jesus claimed himself to be the king of the Jews (Jn 18.33).

[123] Scholars have discussed whether the high priest's question and Jesus' reply reflect the historical situation or is the product of the early Christian community. Those who reject their historicity base their argument on two premises: i) The early Church applied all the messianic titles to Jesus in the light of their experience of his resurrection. Cf. Leonardo Boff, *Passion of the Christ, Passion of the World: the facts, their interpretation and their meaning yesterday and today* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1987), p. 38. Boff rejects the historicity of the high priest's use of the title 'Son of God', arguing that the primitive Christian community applied all the titles of grandeur they knew, whether Jewish, Hellenistic, or Judeo-Hellenistic, to the Christ raised from the dead. ii) The use of the title 'Son of God' has a Hellenistic background. Boff also argues that in Judaism, in spite of Psalm 2.7 that speaks of the messiah-Christ as God's son, the notion of a king's divine filiation was rejected.

However, what we must consider the fact that, from the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, the Jewish people were prompted to ask whether Jesus was the Messiah at all. In other words, the question concerning Jesus' identity was an inevitable one. In that historical context, it would not be strange for

priests, the elders, and the scribes are assembled (Mk 14.53).[124] The members of the council fail to present convincing evidence to prove that Jesus deserves death. In the end, the high priest questions Jesus: "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" (Mk 14.61). Our concern here is to identify the figure designated by the titles in the high priest's interrogation in the context of trial narratives.

The Evangelists agree that the charge which the Jewish religious leaders brought against Jesus before Pilatewas that of claiming to be the King of the Jews. The charge of King of the Jews seems to be a political translation of the title Son of God. In John's report, we are given the evidence that the Jewish people clearly connected the Son of God title with kingship. In Jn 19.7 they urge Pilate to prosecute Jesus, saying, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because *he has claimed* to be the Son of God." Also, in Jn 19.12 they cry out that he should not release Jesus, touching

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the high priest to question Jesus whether he was 'the Messiah, the Son of God'. If the title 'Son of God' has a Hellenistic background, it would be odd that the high priest in Judaism should use the title in his question. Although Boff rejects the existence of the notion of a king's divine filiation in Judaism, he seems to contradict his own argument by stating that in Judaism the Son of God title was applied to the messiah "in the sense of the familiar figure in which oriental royalty was referred to as the offspring of God." *Ibid.*, p. 38. It must be pointed out that the oriental royalty who was referred to as the offspring of God is none other than the king. If so, the use of the title 'Son of God' in Judaism should also designate the king, which affirms the divine filiation of the king.

Another piece of evidence that favours the historicity of this question is found in John's Gospel. John reports that the Jewish leaders handed Jesus over to Pilate because they did not have capital jurisdiction is accepted as historically reliable. See Ellis Rivkin, "What Crucified Jesus?" in *Jesus Jewishness. Exploring the Place of Jesus within Judaism*, ed. by James H. Charlesworth (New York: Crossroad, 1991), p.248. Rivkin holds that this report of the lack of capital jurisdiction on the part of the Jewish authorities bears true witness to the imperial system and its jurisdiction over political issues. A. N. Sherwin-White, "The Trial of Christ," in *Historicity and Chronology in the Gospels* (London: SPCK, 1965), pp. 97-116, also points out that the Jewish high priestly authorities or Sanhedrin lacked the power of capital punishment, which was jealously guarded by the Roman imperial government.

The Jewish religious leaders explain to Pilate why they hand Jesus over to him: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death" (Jn 18.31). In this statement, the Jewish leaders make it clear that they have found Jesus guilty, deserving capital punishment. Why did they consider Jesus deserves death? The answer is given in the charge that they brought against Jesus, which is stated explicitly in John 19.7: Jesus claimed himself to be the Son of God. If John's report of the decision of the Jewish religious leaders who found Jesus guilty of capital punishment and brought him to Pilate is accepted to be historically reliable, then his report of their accusation that Jesus claimed himself to be the Son of God must also be accepted as historically true. If the charge brought against Jesus that he claimed himself to be the Son of God is supported as historical fact, then there should be no reason for us to regard the question of the high priest as simply the product of the early Christian community.

[124] The Gospel writers report that Jesus was brought before the high priest's Sanhedrin convened and presided by him. Ellis Rivkin, *ibid.*, p. 247, maintains that the accounts of Jesus' trial in the synoptic gospels are historically credible on the basis of the fact that they did not report that Jesus had been brought before a *bet din*, presided over by a teacher of the Law. He explains that in Jesus' day, a charismatic would never be brought before a religious body to be tried for his life, however deviant his religious teachings, and thus the Evangelists' report reflects the historical situation correctly.

on a delicate area: "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone *who claims* to be the king sets himself against the emperor." It is obvious that Jesus' *claim* to be the Son of God is understood as his *claim* to be a king. We may refer to Mark 15.32 where the titles the Christ and the King of Israel are used in apposition. Drawing on these observations, it is safe to argue that, in the context of the trial narratives, the Son of God is translated politically to designate the king of the Jews or the king of Israel.[125]

By answering *ego eimi*, Jesus clearly affirms that he was the Christ, the Son of God (Mk 14.62).[126] After affirming that he is the Christ (i.e., the Messiah) and the Son of God, Jesus adds the title of his self-designation, i.e., the Son of Man.[127] In answer to the question of the high priest, Jesus clearly discloses before the Sanhedrin that he was the Messiah and the royal figure Son of God. In addition, he declares his participation in the cosmic lordship as the Son of Man. The identity of Jesus that has been only implicitly revealed to the public is explicitly affirmed by Jesus before the Sanhedrin. Jesus discloses his status as the kingly figure of the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Son of Man.[128]

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[125] Donald Juel, *Messiah and Temple. The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1987), p. 82, holds that the title "Son of God" was used by Mark as a royal title.

[126] Cf. Juel, *ibid.*, p. 84. He observes that, though Matthew uses '*su eipas hoti ego eimi*' (Mt 26.64) and Luke uses '*humeis legete*' (Lk 22.70), there seems to be "no reservation on Jesus' part regarding the appropriateness of the titles 'the Christ, the Son of the Blessed.'" The confession of the Centurion (Mk 15.39) and the mockery of the crowd (Mk 15.32) both support the fact that "in the eyes of Jesus' opponents, Jesus has accepted the messianic designations as an appropriate characterization of himself."

[127] Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 14, interprets what Jesus actually meant by the answer in the following way: "If Messiah is the word which you insist on using, my answer can only be Yes; but if I were to choose my own words, this is what I should say --- the declaration of the Son of Man (Mk 14.62)." Bruce seems to suggest that the title Messiah was not Jesus' own word to designate himself. But it will be difficult to explain why Jesus complied to their use of the word Messiah when it was not his own word, thus creating misunderstanding about his identity. Regardless of the use of the title Messiah by the high priest, there is no reason for Jesus to answer in the affirmative against his own will.

[128] The Son of Man declaration of Jesus contains the enthronement of Jesus and his parousia, thus emphasising the royal status of Jesus. David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973), p. 58, summarises his extensive study on the imagery involved in sitting at the right hand as follows. In ancient paganism and Judaism generally, the right side symbolised potency and honour. Long before the Christian era pagans spoke of kings and gods exalted to thrones at the right hand of other gods, and they sometimes described bliss after death in terms of right-hand location. The Hebrew scriptures and later Jewish writings spoke of men and supernatural beings gaining right-hand or heavenly thrones, often without implying that any

ii) *The Trial of Jesus before Pilate* (Mk 15.1-5 *par.*). Although the Jewish religious leaders find Jesus guilty of blasphemy for claiming to be the Son of God, which constitutes the crime liable to capital punishment, they hand him over to Pilate. They are reported to have said: "We are not permitted to put anyone to death."

The first question that Pilate asked Jesus is: "Are you the King of the Jews?" (Mk 15.2). Bruce denies that Jesus acknowledged his claim of kingship of Israel. He observes that, if Jesus had accepted the designation of Messiah, it could well have been represented to Pilate as a claim to be king of the Jews.[129] According to Bruce, Pilate's repeated attempt to release Jesus indicates the fact that Jesus actually denied the charge of claiming to be the king of the Jews. Leonardo Boff presents a similar interpretation.[130] He maintains that Jesus did not respond to Pilate's question and remained silent. He argues that if Jesus had admitted the charge, Pilate's attempt to release Jesus three times would be unintelligible. However, these scholars emphasise only one side of the story. We must also note the fact that Jesus did not expressly deny being the king of the Jews. If Jesus denied the charge of having claimed to be the king of the Jews, it is difficult to understand why the soldiers mocked Jesus, addressing him 'the king of the Jews'. It is also unintelligible that Pilate himself uses the expression of "king of the Jews" on the inscription on the cross, even though he tried to release Jesus because of his apparent innocence.[131] If Jesus had denied the charge, there would be no reason for Pilate to be bothered about the possible accusation by the Jewish leaders that he was not Caesar's friend. If Jesus had explicitly denied the charge, Pilate could have supported his repeated attempts to release Jesus on the ground that Jesus denied the charge, which could have silenced the Jewish religious leaders. The response of Jesus as reported in John clearly affirms his claim to the royal title. Jesus made it clear that he was a king, though defining his kingship not in the political context: "My *kingship* is not of this world; if *my kingship* were of this world, my servants would

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particular function was linked with such elevation. The use of the right hand imagery in Mk 14.62 then indicates the royal dignity of the Son of Man.

[129] Bruce, *ibid.*

[130] Boff, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

[131] For the historicity of the inscription, see P. Winter, *On the Trial of Jesus* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1961), pp. 154-156; E. Bammel, "The *titulus*," in Bammel and Moule (eds.), *Jesus and the Politics of*

fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but *my kingship* is not from the world" (Jn 18.36). Although Jesus explicitly affirms his kingship, Pilate attempts to release Jesus.

Although Pilate has to consent to the request to kill Jesus on a charge of claiming the kingship of Israel, he does not perceive Jesus to be guilty.[132] Pilate does not consider Jesus as someone who claims to be a king of Israel in the sense that he would mobilise the people to rebel against the Roman colonial power.[133] According to Luke, Pilate tried to release Jesus three times (Lk 23.22). He was also aware of the fact that the Jewish religious leaders had handed Jesus over to him out of envy (Mk 15.10/ Mt 27.18). How then can we explain Pilate's reluctance to execute Jesus?[134] It is the image of Jesus which does not encourage Pilate to comply with the request of the Jewish religious leaders to put Jesus to death. The life and ministry of Jesus did not fit into the image of the sort of king of Israel who would set himself against the Roman colonial government. Although Jesus does not deny the charge of claiming to be the King of the Jews, the image of Jesus was not perceived to correspond to that claim.

His Day (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 353-364; E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM Press, 1985), pp. 294-318.

[132] *Contra* S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots: a study of the political factor in primitive Christianity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), who argues that Jesus was deeply involved in the politics of his time by starting a religio-political movement like that of the Zealots.

[133] According to the Gospel of Luke, even Herod found Jesus not guilty of the charge of high treason. Hearing that Jesus was from Galilee, Pilate sent him to Herod who happened to stay in Jerusalem. Luke reports that Herod was glad when Jesus was delivered to him, for he had long desired to him because he had heard about him and was hoping to see some sign done by him (Lk 23.8). Herod heard of the deeds of Jesus before and thought of him as the re-incarnation of John the Baptist (Mk 6.14 par.). This indicates that the deeds of Jesus was not perceived to be particularly dangerous to the maintenance of order in colonial Palestine. Hence, it is noteworthy to see what Josephus reports about the death of John the Baptist from the political perspective. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 18.116-19, writes that Herod feared the possible insurrection that John's leadership might provoke and put him to death to get rid of him. If Herod, who was so keen on maintaining the political order, wanted to meet Jesus after hearing of what Jesus had done, he would not have perceived Jesus' activities as posing a significant threat to order within the empire.

[134] Some have doubted the historicity of the presentation of Pilate in the Gospels. A. Nolan holds that the accounts of Jesus' trial in the Gospels are fabricated by the early church to blame the Jews for Jesus' death on the basis of the observation that the picture of Pilate we find in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' trial do not correspond to the picture of Pilate presented in other historical data. See his *Jesus before Christianity*, p. 128. The picture of Pilate that Nolan imagines is that of a ruthless governor. According to Nolan, Pilate even provoked the Jews first and did not hesitate to slaughter them if they protested or rebelled. So Nolan conjectures that Pilate would have regarded Jesus as a very serious political threat even if he had known that Jesus did not intend setting up the new kingdom by force of arms. *Ibid.*, p. 129. However, it will be significant to note that Luke, who knows too well about the

iii) *Summary.* The trial of Jesus gives us an important clue about Jesus' identity. Jesus expressly acknowledged his status as the Christ, the Son of God, and also declared his divine lordship as the Son of Man. The Jewish religious leaders charge Jesus with claiming to be the Son of God, i.e., the Davidic-Messiah as the king of Israel.[135] It is obvious that Jesus' identity is presented as the Davidic Messiah, the kingly figure of the Son of God, not as a minjung. Although Jesus acknowledged his status as the Christ, the Son of God, and thus accepted the charge of kingship, his life and ministry evoked very different images from those that had been associated with the some titles in the history of Israel.

Jesus and the Good Shepherd (Jn 10.1-18)

Jesus understood himself as shepherd in his relation to the people. Jesus describes his status and ministry by using the imagery of a shepherd. Not only does Jesus allude to the fact that he is the shepherd of the people of Israel (cf. Mk 14.27), he explicitly claims himself to be the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10.11, 14).[136] In particular, it is in John that Jesus explicitly claims that he is the Good Shepherd. Unlike the contemporary Jewish leaders whom Jesus admonished as thieves and robbers or as hirelings,[137] Jesus

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cruelty of Pilate (eg. see Lk 13.1), reports that Pilate attempted to release Jesus *three times* during the process of the trial.

[135] What we find in the trial narratives is that the titles used to refer to Jesus do interpret one another. The high priest used the titles 'the Christ' and 'the Son of God' (or the Son of the Blessed) in apposition (Mk 14.61; Mt 26.63). The Jewish religious leaders interpreted these titles as designating the King of the Jews. It is also significant that, though acknowledging his messianic status designated by those titles, Jesus himself used the title of the Son of Man for self-designation (Mk 14.61-62). We can find a similar case in the story of Jesus meeting with Nathanael (Jn 1.43-51). When Philip, who was called to follow Jesus, saw Nathanael, he told him that he met the Messiah: We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote (Jn 1.45). Andrew, who was called first, told his brother Simon that we have found the Messiah (Jn 1.41). Though suspicious at the beginning, Nathanael confessed that Jesus was the Son of God, the King of Israel. Jesus clearly endorsed Nathanael's confession of his status as the Son of God and the King of Israel: Do you believe that because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? (v. 50). Then Jesus says to Nathanael that he will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon *the Son of Man* (v. 51).

[136] Seeing the crowd following him, Jesus describes them as sheep without a shepherd (Mk 6.34 par). In the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15. 3-7 par.), Jesus compares himself to the shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine sheep in the fold in search of the one lost sheep. Jesus also uses the shepherd-imagery to describe himself as the Son of Man who will divide the sheep from the goats at the final judgement (Mt 25.31-33). These passages clearly show that Jesus understood himself as the shepherd.

[137] There are four possible interpretations of the identity of the thieves and robbers: 1) R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), pp. 371f., suggests that the thieves and robbers are the various saviours of the Hellenistic world. D.A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), p. 382, refutes this view on the basis of the fact that, as Johns

claimed himself to be the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10.11, 14). Jesus' claim as the Good Shepherd in John seems to combine all the shepherd imageries in the Synoptic gospels.

The Shepherd in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the shepherd-imagery is used to designate God (Ps 23.1; 80.2; Isa 40.11; Jer 31.9; cf. Ps 74.1; 79.13; 95.7; 100.3) or to refer to David or the Davidic messiah (Ps 78.70-2; Ezek 37.24; Mic 5.3. cf. Ps Sol 17.45)), but the Old Testament never calls the reigning monarch shepherd.[138] The shepherd image was also used for political and military leaders in connection with the judgement to come, and particularly for the unfaithful leaders of Israel who do harm to God's flock (Jer 2.8; 10.20; 12.10).

In Ezek 34.23-24, the eschatological hope of Israel for the appearance of an ideal ruler is expressed in shepherd imagery. Here, God promises to send a Davidic shepherd-king for Israel: "I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them." This ruler is characterised by strength and service. To the people of Israel David was a symbol of a strong king who ruled with justice and fairness.[139] The word "set up" carries with it monarchical overtones related to the traditions of the enthronement of David. Although he is placed in a position of authority over the people, the idea of service is particularly emphasised. In Mich 5.2-4 the future leader of Israel is described with

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readers were primarily Jews and proselytes in the Diaspora, the most natural identification would have been the Jewish leaders and the various Jewish messianic pretenders among them. 2) They could be referring to the false messiahs who claimed the role of saviour of Israel. Carson, *ibid.*, p. 382, hints at the possibility of finding the messianic pretenders behind v. 8. 3) They could be Zealot leaders. Carson holds that the expression may be taken as indicating messianic pretenders who promise the people freedom but who lead them into war, suffering and slavery. *Idem.* But it must be pointed out that the image of robbers and thieves is primarily used to designate those who exploit the people to feed themselves. 4) Most scholars take the expression thieves and robbers as denoting the contemporary Jewish rulers, particularly religious leaders. Cf. Ronald S. Wallace, *The Gospel of John. Chapters 1-4* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1991), p. 181. George Appleton, *John's Witness to Jesus* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956), p. 54, also interprets them as referring to the Jewish rulers and identifies them with the contemporary religious leaders. Carson notes that the primary background of the image of false shepherds is Ezekiel 34. He maintains that, as the shepherds of Israel who were berated by God in Ezekiel 34 were then contemporary religious leaders, the thieves and the robbers are religious leaders in the time of Jesus. *The Gospel according to John*, p. 382. He further identifies these leaders with those religious leaders in chapter 9.

[138] J. T. Willis, "Micah IV 14 - V 5 - a unit," *VT* 18 (1968), pp. 529-547.

shepherd-imagery: "A ruler will appear from Bethlehem who will stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord."

The most prominent imagery of the shepherd as the ideal Davidic Messiah-King is that of feeding. In Ezek 34.11-16, where God is referred to by the imagery of good shepherd, it is expected that the shepherd-God will gather his scattered flock and then feed them. The task of the shepherd-God is to seek the lost, to bring back the strayed, and to feed and tend the whole flock, giving particular attention to the ailing and the weak members. Here, in this pericope, the act of feeding seems to be particularly emphasised by repeating it (vv. 13, 14, 15, 16). In particular, God promises that he will feed them *on fat pasture*. In v. 16, God also declares that he will feed his sheep *in justice* (v. 16). *On fat pasture* and *in justice* appear to be parallels that interpret each other. Hence, feeding the sheep seems to be another way of describing the execution of justice in the human community. God gathers his scattered people and feed them, i.e., create a community where justice is established for his name's sake.[140]

We must not fail to note that Ps. 23.1-3 portrays God as the good shepherd who feeds his sheep. After the announcement that God is his shepherd, the psalmist explains what the shepherd-God does for him: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul" (vv. 1-3). What the psalmist describes in v. 2 are the tasks that a shepherd normally does for his sheep. God as the shepherd takes initiative in providing the basic necessities of the sheep. It is not possible for sheep to find green pastures and places beside still waters for themselves. They need a shepherd to lead them. So the shepherd image in v. 2 discloses the psalmist's understanding and confession of God as the shepherd who provides for the basic needs of the sheep which they themselves cannot meet. This expression of God leading his sheep to green pastures and beside still waters shows the psalmist's confidence in the shepherd-God who will take care of the

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[139] J. D. Pleins, "From the Stump of Jesse: The Image of King David as a Social Force in the Writings of the Hebrew Prophets," *Proceedings of the Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Bible Society* 6 (1986), p. 162; John B.Taylor, *Ezekiel* (Dowers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1969), p. 223.

[140] This interpretation is also in accord with the psalmist's understanding of the nature of God as the one who establishes justice. The psalmist proclaims that the true nature of God is justice and righteousness. According to the psalmist, the Lord works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed (Ps 103.6). God establishes justice for all the oppressed of the earth (Ps 76.9). The Lord executes justice for the oppressed (Ps 146.7). The people of Israel appeal to God to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed (Ps 10.18; cf. 35.10).

hungry and weak flock that will be left to suffer from want without the intervention of the shepherd. The announcement, "I shall not want" (v. 1b) is significant in explaining the state in which the sheep are in. What God does for the sheep is not to bring prosperity, but to liberate the sheep from want. In other words, the psalmist praises God not because he is bestowed material wealth and prosperity but because God liberates him from the experience of suffering caused by the lack of basic necessities. The shepherd-God is the provider of food and drink needed for survival. The shepherd-God is both the leader of the sheep and their liberator from want.

The False Shepherds in the Old Testament. The role of the leaders of Israel in their relations with the people is described as that of shepherd. They are condemned as unfaithful shepherds by the prophets.

The unfaithful shepherds are mentioned in Isa 56.11, Jer 23.1-3, Ezek 34.1-10, 16-22, and Zech 10.3, 11.4-17. In Isa 56.9-12, two groups are condemned, the watchmen and the shepherds. The watchmen are the religious leaders and the shepherds are the political leaders. The shepherds are described as lacking understanding and all turning to their own ways, that is to say, they do not understand the ways of God. Although the leaders of Israel are commanded by God to keep justice and to do righteousness (Isa 56.1) as the earthly representatives of shepherd-God, they do not protect the people, instead, they all seek their own profit by abusing the limits of their power.

Jer 23.1-3 also records an admonition to the political leaders of Israel. They are accused of destroying and scattering the sheep of God's pasture. In v. 5 God announces a promise to raise up a righteous branch for David who will execute justice and righteousness in the land. This announcement actually nullifies the legitimacy of the political leaders of Israel for their failure to execute justice and righteousness. In Ezek 34.2 the prophet is commanded to prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Here, the shepherds are designated kings of Israel. The kings and the political leaders as representatives of the divine shepherd are supposed to protect the people. But, God is coming to judge them, for they failed to fulfil their God-given roles. The prophet rebukes them for seeking their own profit, abusing their positions: The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the crippled you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and *with force and harshness* you have ruled them. The God-given duty to care for the marginalized

and the oppressed within the community is completely ignored; instead they exploit and oppress those people. It is significant that the prophet describes the unfaithful rulers as ruling with force and harshness. This expression 'to rule with force and harshness' is used to refer to the oppressive rule of the Egyptians over the people of Israel (Exod 1.13f.). In Lev 25.43,46 it is forbidden to treat the fellow people of Israel in this way. The prophet accuses the rulers of Israel for doing exactly what the Egyptians did to them while in Egypt.[141] If vv. 13-15 came from the Exodus tradition,[142] God's feeding symbolises none other than a new Exodus. Feeding the people of Israel in fat pasture, i.e., in justice, is contrasted with the oppressive rule of Egypt and reminds us that Exodus is liberation from oppression. Together with the rulers, the bad sheep within the flock, i.e., those people with authority, the whole ruling class, and the rich people are also accused by the prophet. The political leaders lose control of the entire societyand become accomplices in creating injustice. The picture of fat sheep and lean sheep vividly projects the contrast between the haves and the have-nots. God announces that he will terminate the domination of the weak by the rich and powerful people. In this instance, at least, God makes it clear that he sides with the poor and the oppressed.[143]

Jesus as the Good Shepherd. By claiming himself to be the Good Shepherd, Jesus discloses his self-understanding as a royal figure,[144] but his mission is exclusively to take care of the sheep.[145] In the Jewish religious context where the shepherd imagery

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[141] Cf. W. Lemke, "Life in the Present and Hope in the Future," *Interpretation* 38 (1984), p. 163, n. 10.

[142] Bruce Vawter and Leslie J. Hoppe, *A New Heart. A Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), p. 155.

[143] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

[144] *Contra* Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 2. Trans. By K. Smyth *et. al.* (Burns and Oates, 1968), p. 295, who argues that the shepherds in John 10.11-15 bears no ruler-like features. Besides the Jewish understanding of the shepherd imagery based on the Old Testament references, the shepherd-sheep distinction in the present context clearly implies their different statuses. The shepherd is not one of the sheep, but one who takes care of them. The shepherd's authority and responsibility is hardly explained in the Jewish social setting except in terms of the ruler-people relationship.

was already used as a designation for God and the messiah, Jesus' self-claim to be the Good Shepherd means that he is virtually claiming himself to be the fulfilment of the Davidic messiah-king who embodies the mission to establish justice as the true representative of God.[146] Hence, Jesus as the Good Shepherd gathers the people of God and takes care of them as God's earthly representative. Jesus describes his mission as the Good Shepherd in two ways: i) to secure pasture for the sheep (Jn 10.9) and to give them life: "I came (*ego elthon*) that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (v. 10); and ii) to lay down his life for the sheep.[147]

Jesus makes it clear that his mission as the Good Shepherd is to secure pasture for his sheep. His task is to establish a just society where people will have their humanity restored.[148] Thus, Jesus fulfils the function of an ideal shepherd both in his character and in his work.[149] Brian M. Nolan suggests that the feeding of the multitude in Mk 6.34f. has political and regal implications, as well as eschatological and eucharistic overtones.[150] He maintains that Jesus fed the multitude as the shepherd-king.[151] As we

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[145] In the preface of *Mokmin Shimso*, Yak-Yong Chong states: "Mencius compared feeding the cattle on the plain to caring and serving the people." As *mokmin* means "serving the people", a shepherd is translated into *mok-ja*, i.e., literally, a person who feeds.

[146] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Light Has Come* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 128. In Mk 14.27 where he announces his death by citing Zech 13.7, Jesus identifies himself with the Davidic shepherd-king in Zech 9-14.

[147] Schnackenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 296, maintains that the expression 'the sheep' does not include the idea of representation. It is correct that the word itself does not mean 'instead of'. However, as William Hendriksen, *Gospel of John.* New Testament Commentary (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1973), p. 110, has rightly pointed out, a good shepherd lays down his life *for the benefit of* the sheep. Carson *op. cit.*, p. 386, notes that the preposition is always used in a sacrificial context (6.51; 10.11, 15; 11.50ff.; 17.19; 18.14 in reference to the death of Jesus. 13.37-38 of Peter; 15.13 of a man for his friend). In all these verses, the death is described as a death on behalf of someone else, not an exemplary death. Then it becomes possible to interpret the death of the good shepherd to mean a representative death. If the death of the shepherd is merely an exemplary death, it will be of no benefit to the sheep. If the shepherd's death is to benefit the sheep, it should be a death on behalf of the sheep. By dying *instead of* the sheep, the shepherd makes the sheep live. Hendriksen, *ibid.*, p. 111. If the death of the shepherd is not representative death, dying instead of the sheep, it will only expose the sheep to dangers. Schnackenburg, *idem.*, explains that the phrase for the sheep only reveals the solicitude of the shepherd, which is self-sacrificing to the bitter end, but does not offer an explanation on what prompts the shepherd to sacrifice himself instead of surviving and caring for the sheep.

[148] Cf. Carson, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

[149] Hendriksen, *John*, p. 110; John Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian* (London: SPCK, 1979), p. 43; Schnackenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

[150] Brian M. Nolan, *The Royal Son of God: The Christology of Matthew 1-2 in the setting of the Gospel*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 23 (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), p. 179.

have shown above, feeding the sheep in abundance is the role of the ideal shepherd-king and this image of feeding the sheep signifies the establishment of social justice.

Conclusion

The image of Jesus as a 'minjung Jesus' is not supported by the biblical data. Although minjung theologians perceive Jesus as a mere minjung based on his origin from Galilee, his lack of education, his occupation and his association with the minjung, the Gospel writers clearly report that Jesus understood himself as a royal figure and was also thought to be as such by his contemporaries. If Jesus' status is perceived to be a "mere" minjung, the theological agenda of minjung theology stands on shaky grounds, for the perception of Jesus as a minjung does not deliver any message of hope to the Korean minjung. If the description of Jesus as a 'minjung Jesus' can be theologically and contextually significant, it must be ascribed to Jesus' own royal status. In other words, the fact that Jesus, being a royal figure, sided with the minjung is significant. The clearer picture of Jesus as a royal figure we draw, the more his siding with the poor *min* in Jewish society carries radical character and becomes the source of hope for the suffering poor *min*.

[151] *Ibid.* He also observes that such royal bounty is expressed as the essential element of the ancient ideology of kingship. For a similar view, see W. Brueggemann, "Kingship and Chaos (A Study of Tenth Century Theology)," *CBQ* 33 (1971), pp. 317-332.

Chapter Four. Jesus and *Mokmin* Spirit (I): Solidarity with the Poor and the Oppressed *Min*

Introduction

One of the most salient aspects of Jesus' mission is his showing solidarity with the poor and the oppressed people in Jewish society. Jesus broke the social and religious barriers by associating with people who were marginalised in society for various reasons. The characterisation of Jesus as 'a friend of tax-collectors and sinners' by then religious leaders manifests the nature of his mission. Minjung theologians assert that Jesus' association with tax-collectors and sinners represents his mission as 'minjung movement', for they perceive 'tax-collectors and sinners' to be the typical minjung during the time of Jesus. Although Jesus' act broke the social and religious barriers, it is difficult to describe it as a 'minjung movement', for we cannot characterise Jesus' association with tax collectors and sinners as his act of showing solidarity with the poor *min*. We argue that Jesus' *mokmin* praxis is identified in his act of healing the sick who represent the poor *min* in *Sitz im Leben Jesu*. Jesus, being a royal figure, had compassion on those suffering people and became the source of their hope by accepting them unconditionally. By even connecting his proclamation of the Kingdom of God with the poor *min*, Jesus emphasised that their existence should not be despised in society. Minjung theology has contributed significantly to the awakening of Christians in Korea to the suffering reality of the poor *min*, but its exposition of biblical texts proved to be less than persuasive. We will, therefore, examine how Jesus' mission with the poor *min* is interpreted in minjung theology, and present our reflection on the significance of Jesus' act of healing in relation to his *mokmin* praxis.

I. Understanding of Jesus' Solidarity with the Poor and Oppressed in Minjung Theology

I.1. Jesus and the Kingdom of God Movement

Minjung theologians characterise Jesus' ministry as essentially the kingdom of God movement. They perceive the Jesus movement as the kingdom of God movement,[1] because they believe that Jesus' life and ministry should be understood against his

[1] B. Ahn, *A Story of Minjung Theology*, p. 238.

proclamation of the kingdom of God. Jesus, who was a minjung himself, staged a minjung movement which was a kingdom of God movement, and, as the result, was executed on the cross.[2] Minjung theologians characterise Jesus' earthly mission as a minjung movement in the sense that he struggled for the liberation of the minjung. They also maintain that Jesus' table community movement, his act of casting out the demons and his confrontation with the Jerusalem system represent his mission as a minjung movement. Before we examine these aspects of Jesus' earthly ministry, it is necessary to survey how the kingdom of God is interpreted in minjung theology.

Description of the Kingdom of God in Minjung Theology

Ahn maintains that scholars have failed to grasp the reality of the kingdom of God because they have concentrated on the issue of whether the coming of the kingdom of God was for the present or for the future.[3] According to Ahn, the kingdom of God can be grasped when its historical context is explicated[4] and also when its proclamation is linked with Jesus' ministry.[5] Thus, minjung theologians attempt to identify the significance of Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God, particularly for the Galilean minjung who formed the immediate audience of Jesus.

Minjung theologians emphasise that Jesus simply proclaimed the Kingdom of God without attempting to explain it. Ahn asserts that Jesus did not have to describe the kingdom of God because it was a familiar concept for him and for his audience.[6] Jesus was well aware of the aspiration of the minjung at that time, which was none other

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[2] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 146.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 103. Ahn notes that, since Jesus was not the first who referred to the Kingdom of God in the history of Israel, the historical context from which the concept of Kingdom of God formulated must be investigated.

[5] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, pp. 104-105.

[6] Ahn, "Kingdom of God--Kingdom of the Minjung," *A Story on Minjung Theology*, p. 230. He states: "If Jesus was referring to a different reality from the picture of the Kingdom of God that the people of Israel came to have in the course of their history, he had to explain about the Kingdom of God in detail. The fact that Jesus did not attempt to describe the Kingdom of God supports the premise that Jesus had the common understanding about the Kingdom of God with his audience and that the expectation of the people of Israel was congruous with the coming of the Kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed." Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 110.

than the coming of the Kingdom of God.[7] We need, therefore, to identify how the Kingdom of God was understood by Jesus and by his contemporary minjung.

Kingdom of God as Minjung Liberation: Domestic Side

In minjung theology, the Kingdom of God designates the world where minjung is liberated.[8] Thus, to describe the kingdom of God, it becomes necessary to illuminate the ideal world in which minjung is liberated.

First of all, minjung theologians argue that the historical context in which the concept of the Kingdom of God was formulated should be studied in order to grasp the concept correctly. Minjung theologians perceive the Kingdom of God not primarily as a theological idea but as the expression of the minjung's aspiration. The expectation of the coming of the Kingdom of God is not separate from the sufferings of the minjung.[9] In other words, the concept of the Kingdom of God was formulated in the midst of the concrete historical situation of the Palestine minjung.

Ahn describes the sufferings of the minjung in Palestine during the time of Jesus in terms of economic exploitation. He observes that Palestinian minjung suffered a threefold exploitation: by the Jerusalem temple system, by the government of Herod and by the tax imposed directly by Roman colonial rule.[10] So, according to Ahn, the Kingdom of God which the people of Israel had expected was the kingdom that would liberate minjung from such economic exploitations. Jae-Soon Park maintains that the Kingdom of God is contrasted with the exploitative and oppressive social system or political power.[11] According to Park, it is natural for minjung who suffered under the oppressive and exploitative human rule to aspire for the direct reign of God that would establish a society in which freedom and equality prevail.[12] For suffering people, the Kingdom of God does not need to be explained. That is, the Kingdom of God being

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[7] Ahn, *ibid.*, pp. 111, 144.

[8] Ki-Deuk Song, "The Identity of Minjung Theology," p. 81.

[9] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 232.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] Jae-Soon Park, "Jesus' Table Community Movement and Church," (in Korean) *in Development of Minjung Theology in the 1980s* (Seoul: Korea Theological Research Institute, 1990), p. 527.

understood by the suffering minjung is the kingdom where they do not have to suffer hunger at all and where there are plenty of food.[13] The Kingdom of God in minjung theology refers to the society where minjung is liberated from poverty and at the same time from oppressive human rule.

Kingdom of God and Mono-Yawehism: Foreign Side

Minjung theologians equate the Kingdom of God with the realisation of the lordship of God. Ahn identifies three streams within the expectation of the Kingdom of God in the history of Israel. First, the ancient Israel which formed a liberated community after Exodus.[14] Ahn characterises the ancient community of Israel, composed of twelve tribes, as a community built on the protection of human rights, and asserts that the people of Israel were able to maintain the community for two hundred years because of their unity under the banner of 'mono-Yahwehism'. According to Ahn, the banner of 'mono-Yahwehism' not only provided the people of Israel with the belief that they were people of the kingdom ruled directly by Yahweh but operated a political manifesto rejecting any form of human rule. The establishment of God's direct rule was incompatible with human monarchical rule.[15] Ahn argues that the Old Testament prophets referred to this model as an ideal state when they criticised the corruption of the Israelite government. Secondly, those in the ruling class who were brainwashed by the Davidic dynasty considered the restoration of the Davidic kingdom as the establishment of the Kingdom of God.[16] Ahn explains that, in the context of the constant oppression by the foreign powers, it was natural for the people of Israel to envision the restoration of the powerful kingdom built by David. Ahn argues that this yearning had developed into the messianic expectation that the Messiah would emerge from within the offspring of David. By asserting that David destroyed this ancient

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[12] *Ibid.*

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, pp. 104-105.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

[16] Ahn, *ibid*, argues that the ancient community of Israel was destroyed by David. According to Ahn, though Samuel anoints Saul as king of Israel because of the increasing demands of the people, it was David who built the kingdom of Israel for the first time. Ahn also holds that David brought the Ark of

community of Israel based on the tribal unity, Ahn denies any connection between the expectation of Kingdom of God and the restoration of the Davidic kingdom or appearance of the Davidic king.[17] Thirdly, the expectation of Kingdom of God affected by the ideas of apocalyptic. According to Ahn, this concept of Kingdom of God became religious ideal rather than political ideal, combining the Kingdom of God with eschatology.

Among these three strands, Ahn asserts that the first represents the authentic minjung understanding of Kingdom of God. Thus, the Kingdom of God as Jesus and the contemporary minjung understood was the termination of any form of human rule and the establishment of the direct reign of God which characterised ancient Israel.[18]

Critique of Minjung Description of the Kingdom of God

We will notice some inconsistencies and conflicting arguments in Ahn's description of the Kingdom of God. Although he accepts only the first perception of the Kingdom of God, he contradicts himself by making remarks suggesting that he actually accepts both the second and the third concepts of Kingdom of God.

Ahn regards the ancient community of Israel as ideal community to which the Old Testament prophets referred in criticising the corrupt monarchical rule. According to Ahn, the historical context that generated the aspiration for the Kingdom of God was the corrupt monarchical rule inaugurated by David and the incessant foreign invasion and domination. But, he contradicts himself by citing Psalm 145 and considering it as a reflection of the continued aspiration for the Kingdom of God in the history of Israel.[19] He thinks that this psalm was recited at the tribal festival in ancient Israel.[20] If this is so, it becomes clear that the aspiration for the Kingdom of God existed even in the ancient tribal community of Israel which was pictured as an ideal community by the

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the Covenant to Jerusalem to justify his monopoly of power, and Solomon, who built a temple, enforced the ideology that Yahweh is present only in the temple.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

[20] *Ibid.*

Old Testament prophets and by Jesus.[21] It then becomes necessary to explain the historical context that prompted the people in ancient Israel to expect the coming of Kingdom of God. If the people of ancient Israel expected the coming of Kingdom of God, we may assume that they hoped for the termination of human rule and the establishment of God's exclusive lordship within their own society. If this observation is correct, the ancient tribal community of Israel cannot be considered as ideal community being reigned directly by Yahweh. Another contradiction is observed in his citation of Isa 9.5-6 which reflects the Israelite people's aspiration for the Kingdom of God. Ahn interprets Isa 9.5-6 as an expression of the restoration of God's reign through his human agent, the offspring of David.[22] While rejecting the identification of the Kingdom of God with the restoration of the Davidic kingdom,[23] Ahn at the same time admits that the expectation of the prophet Isaiah as authentic expression in itself.[24]

Ahn seems to have overlooked another important aspect of 'mono-Yahwehism'. He emphasises that mono-Yahwehism reflects the political decision on the part of the Israelite people to accept only the lordship of Yahweh against any form of human rule. Following N. K. Gottwald,[25] Ahn argues that the exclusive mono-Yahwehism of the Israelite people was not formulated in the context of carving out a religious identity against other competing deities, but in the context of their experience of Exodus from the absolute monarchical rule in Egypt.[26] Hence Ahn interprets mono-Yahwehism as an exclusively political proclamation. However, it is doubtful whether mono-Yahwehism was formulated as an exclusively political manifesto. What must not be overlooked is that mono-Yahwehism was demanded of the people of Israe when they formed the tribal community in ancient Israel. What was requested from the people of Israel was

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[21] Ahn, *ibid.*, p. 109, argues that Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God must be understood in the line of the Old Testament prophets who envisaged the ancient Israel as ideal society.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[23] Ahn, *ibid.*, p. 109, describes the equation between the Kingdom of God and the restoration of the Davidic kingdom as 'confusion'.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[25] N. K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: a sociology of the religion of liberated Israel* (London: SCM Press, 1980), p. 682.

faithfulness to Yahweh who led them from their bondage in Egypt, and it was expressed in mono-Yahwehism. When the prophets invoked mono-Yahwehism, rebuking the corrupt monarchical rule of Israel, they were criticising the loss of true worship of Yahweh rather than expressing their expectation of the restoration of Yahweh's direct reign which would terminate human monarchical rule. Insofar as the messages of the Old Testament prophets were directed to human rulers who did not uphold mono-Yahwehism, there should be no difficulty in admitting that the messages took on a political nature. However, as the prophets were demanding a return to true worship of God and to the keeping of his commandments, it must be admitted that the messages carried religious character.

Another aspect we need to consider in explaining the political nature of mono-Yahwehism is that, if we follow Ahn's argument, the proclamation of mono-Yahwehism was targeted against foreign powers, not against domestic rulers. Ahn explains that the historical context for the creation of faith in mono-Yahwehism was the oppressive monarchical rule in Egypt. In the context of Exodus experience, people of Israel became united under the banner of mono-Yahwehism.[27] Ahn makes it clear that the exclusive faith of Israelite people in mono-Yahwehism replaced the absolute power under which they had suffered.[28] According to Ahn, the expectation of the sovereignty of God in the history of Israel emerged when the kingdom of Israel was divided, weakened and finally fell into the hands of then newly-emerged empires.[29] Commenting on Isa 52.7, a prophet's song in the historical situation when some of the Israelite captives were returning from their Babylonian exile, Ahn accepts the identification of the establishment of God's rule with the building of a new kingdom in the concrete history of Judah.[30] He also emphasises the historical nature of the expectation of the Kingdom of God expressed in Dan 4.29-31 which embodies the expectation of the minjung. He states that: "This expresses the wish that the Babylonian empire would perish and the Kingdom of God would be established

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[26] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 109.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

forever. This expectation is based on the conviction that their national predicament was caused by being subjected to the pagan powers, not to Yahweh."[31] By referring to the domination of the Roman power and the Zealot movement during the time of Jesus, Ahn affirms that Galilean minjung expected God's rule against the domination of the Roman empire and of the ruling class in Jerusalem.[32]

If the establishment of the exclusive lordship of God was expected in the context of pagan domination, it becomes difficult to contrast the lordship of God with 'any form of human monarchical rule'.[33] The people of Israel experienced the lordship of God for the first time in their history in the event of the exodus and expected the coming of the Kingdom of God in their Babylonian exile. The lordship of God that the people of Israel expected in their predicament was linked to their liberation from the Babylonian captivity and the restoration of Judah.[34] If this is so, the Kingdom of God that the people of Israel expected in the time of Jesus would mean their liberation from the Roman colonial power and from the ruling class in Jerusalem who served the colonial power. In that historical situation, it is more appropriate to connect the expectation of the Kingdom of God with the restoration of a powerful Davidic kingdom which could expel the pagan domination rather than with the termination of any form of human rule - foreign or domestic.

Minjung theologians argue that the minjung's expectation of the coming of Kingdom of God assumes their negation of the present political order, thus excluding any role of the existing political system.[35] Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God is explained as a political manifesto which denies the established political power. But, it is incorrect to argue that any form of human rule is categorically rejected by those who expected the Kingdom of God. The human rule to be terminated by the coming of the Kingdom

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[31] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 111. It is difficult to regard the ruling class in Jerusalem as authentic domestic monarchical power. It is more appropriate to classify them as part of the colonial system.

[33] J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, p. 99, also contrasts the reign of God with foreign domination. However, the Kingdom of God that will terminate the foreign domination is expected to come with the appearance of God's agent from the house of David.

[34] Ahn., *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 109.

of God was the oppressive and exploitative rule, not human rule in general. The Kingdom of God is the kingdom in which justice is established.

Kingdom of God as Kingdom of Justice

It is correct to observe that Jesus'proclamation of the Kingdom of God assumed that his audience were well aware of what it meant, for he did not explain the nature of the Kingdom of God but simply emphasised its imminence.[36] The Kingdom of God that the people of Israel expected was characterised by "justice"[37] and entailed the judgement of unjust people. The prophet Isaiah repeatedly announces that the justice of God will be established with the coming of God's Kingdom (Isa 5.16; 28.17; 30.18; 32.16; 33.22).[38] Micah also expects that the Kingdom of God will bring justice in society (Mic 4.3, 6-7).[39]

The common message of the Old Testament prophets is that God will accomplish his purpose through his agent, the Messiah. God's earthly representative will lead his people in obedience (Ezek 37.24-28), execute justice (Isa 42.1-4) and die for their iniquities (Isa 53). A king will appear in the house of David whose rule will be founded on justice and righteousness (Isa 9.7). And he will reign with justice and righteousness for the poor in the land (Isa 11.1-5; 32.1).

Jesus linked his life and ministry with the coming of the Kingdom of God. In other words, Jesus' mission has something to do with the establishment of justice in society.

I.2. Jesus' Healing and Minjung Event

Minjung theologians rightly argue that Jesus' concern for the poor and the exploited is manifested in the healing stories. The perception of Jesus' healing in minjung theology

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[35] *Ibid.*

[36] Mott, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*, p. 83; Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom*, pp. 3-4.

[37] Cf. Ps 96.10: "The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad! Clouds and thick darkness are round about him; righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne."

[38] Cf. Mott, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*, p. 85.

[39] Bruce C. Birch, *Let Justice Roll Down. The Old Testament, Ethics, and Christian Life* (Kentuchy: John Knox Press, 1991), p. 228, notes that the Old Testament prophets began to expect the eschatological reign of God's true king, in contrast to the disobedient and sinful rule of Israel's earthly kings, and the establishment of God's kingdom in its fullness. This ideal king, who shows the attributes of God's divine kingship, is expected to appear in the line of David.

is unique in that the work of Jesus is interpreted both as the collective minjung event and as the minjung movement against the Roman power.

Jesus' Healing as Collective Minjung Event

Minjung theologians interpret Jesus' healing activities as minjung event, for the sick people were the poor and the oppressed in society.[40] But, drawing on the premise that Jesus must not be perceived as an individual but as a collective symbol of minjung, minjung theologians argue that we need to pay attention to the events *per se* rather than to the work of Jesus as an individual.[41] Because minjung theologians see Jesus as a collective symbol of minjung, they are not interested in illuminating the person or individual life of Jesus but focus on minjung event. Suh makes this clear by arguing that the subject matter of minjung theology is not Jesus but the minjung. The figure of the historical Jesus becomes important only so far as he is connected with the minjung movement.[42] Ahn asserts that Jesus must be perceived as an event: "It seems to be wrong to perceive Jesus as a person. . . It is not important to trace Jesus as an individual who lived in Galilee two thousand years ago. What is important is event, i.e., Jesus as an event."[43] Thus, what is highlighted in minjung theology is not Jesus as an individual person but Jesus as a collective minjung event.

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[40] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 157, asserts that there are three things that justify the categorisation of the sick as the poor minjung. First, in most cases, they come to Jesus alone (Mk 1.23; 1.40; 5.2, 5.25; 10.46), which suggest the fact that they were already separated from their family. Secondly, most of the diseases were classified as socially unacceptable ones such as leprosy (Mk 1.40), demon-possessed (Mk 1.23; 5.2; 7.26; 9.17), haemorrhage (Mk 5.25-34), blindness (Mk 7.22; 10.36), and the deaf (Mk 7.31-37). These people were expelled from society because of the religious ideology that regarded them as people cursed by God. They were deprived of the basic rights and duties as the members of the society and were alienated from the faith community. Thirdly, among the sick who were cured by Jesus, we cannot find any one who belonged to the wealthy and the powerful class. As reported by the Gospel writers, the highest social class whom Jesus healed was the synagogue ruler (Mk 8.22-23) and the social status of no other one was specified. According to Ahn, the people whom Jesus healed belonged to the low class of the society. Although it is difficult to identify *all* the sick with the poor *min*, it is correct to perceive that *most* of the sick reported in the Gospels were poor. Cf. Yeon-Sup Chin, "The Poor in the New Testament," *Gidokgyo Sasang* (Christian Thought) May (1990), p. 25.

[41] Ahn, "The Subjects of History in Mark," p. 180.

[42] Ahn supports this argument by pointing out Jesus' remark in Lk 7.22 given in the form of a reply to John's inquiry concerning his identity. Ahn argues that Jesus, instead of giving direct answer about who he was, answered the question by the events which were happening. On the basis of this observation, he proceeds to insist that the important thing is the event brought into being by him. It is neither important nor realistic to identify Jesus with pre-existing conceptions such as Messiah or Son of God. See Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 36.

Minjung Initiative in the Healing Stories. Minjung theologians argue that Jesus' healing stories must not be interpreted as Jesus' act for the minjung but as the projection of minjung's own potentiality.[44] Although the Gospel narratives use the expression 'Jesus healed the sick', Ahn does not accept this formula, for such a report makes us think of Jesus as the subject and the sick as the object of the healing events.[45] According to Ahn, if we follow this line of thought, the healing events simply serve as the foil to identify Jesus as the Christ. Ahn maintains that, in that case, the historical nature of the healing events are dehistoricised and the existence of the sick minjung is simply ignored.[46] The healing events which occured in concrete history become conceptualised.[47]

Ahn maintains that the healing-events neither highlight Jesus' superhuman quality nor present Jesus as someone who fulfils a pre-established programme. The crowd, i.e., the sick people, not Jesus took initiative in the healing events. Jesus simply responded to the initiative of minjung, particularly the sick, who surrounded him for the cure of their diseases.[48] Ahn argues that:

> [Jesus] never seeks for the sick voluntarily, nor does he follow an earlier intention (plan) for helping them. On the contrary, the request *always* comes from the minjung's side first. And, accordingly, Jesus' healing activities show Jesus being obedient to the wishes of the patients. In other words, it is the sick who take the initiative for such events to happen. Jesus' healing power, which has a functional relation to the suffering of the minjung, can be realised only when it is met by the will of the minjung.[49]

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[43] Ahn, *ibid.,* p. 36.

[44] Ahn, "The Subjects of History in Mark," p. 182.

[45] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 157.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 158.

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] Ahn, *ibid.*, p. 159. According to Ahn, Jesus was pressed by the aspiration of the sick people to be liberated from the disease: i) The plea of a leper invoked the compassion in the heart of Jesus (Mk 1.40 *par*). ii) The desperation of a synagogue ruler who "fell at his feet" moved Jesus' heart (Mk 5.23-34 par). iii) One Gentile woman came to Jesus. Although she was denied the privilege of healing, she persistently entreated Jesus to heal her daughter which moved Jesus' heart (Mk 7.24-30 *par*). iv) The cry of the blind beggar Bartimaeus succeeded in compelling Jesus into the act of healing (Mk 10.46-52). Based on these cases, Ahn asks: "Would the miraculous events have been possible without the desperate entreating of the sick people?"

Ahn maintains that the announcement "Your faith has made you well" supports his argument.[50] According to Ahn, this saying of Jesus indicates the fact that healing events do not demonstrate Jesus' power but simply disclose the importance of Jesus' encounter with the minjung.[51] Although Jesus referred to the faith of the sick, it does not contain the Christological implication.[52] In other words, "the sick did not expect that Jesus could heal them because he was the Christ but they simply believed that he could heal them."[53] Thus Ahn asserts that it was a faith in the liberation from the disease through the encounter with Jesus, not a faith in Jesus as Christ.[54]

Jesus' Inability. Ahn goes so far as to argue that Jesus did not possess healing power but he was forced to exercise it in relation to other people.[55] Ahn argues that, up to the point of crucifixion in the passion narratives, Jesus' inability is presented without any apology.[56] Ahn refers to Mk 6.5 and argues that Jesus could do no mighty works in his hometown because of the lack of minjung's initiatives at his hometown, for the minjung in his hometown did not believe in him.[57]

Jesus' Exorcism as Anti-Roman Minjung Movement

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[49] Ahn, "Jesus and People (Minjung)," p. 169. Drawing on this argument, Ahn argues that Jesus' healings reflect the projection of the minjung's own potentiality. Cf. Hisako Kinukawa, *Women and Jesus in Mark. A Japanese Feminist Perspective* (New York: Orbis, 1994). She also argues that, in Jesus' healings of women, it was always women who initiated Jesus' healing, thus posed challenges to the accepted norms of society.

[50] Ahn, "The Subjects of History in Mark," p. 182.

[51] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 159.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 160.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

[56] *Ibid.*

[57] *Ibid.*

Ahn argues that Jesus' exorcism must be perceived as part of the minjung movement,[58] for, although Jesus' exorcism does not differ from his act of healing, it discloses an essential aspect of the minjung movement.[59] Jesus acted as one of the minjung among the minjung in solidarity with them, so his exorcism reflects the minjung movement against the existing political power. The fall of Satan symbolises the fall of the existing domination system.

As Ahn identifies Satan with the existing political power, he rejects to interpret Jesus' exorcistic activity as the healing of an individual demon-possessed person because, if Jesus' healing is interpreted as the healing of an individual, Jesus' healing activity cannot be linked with the fall of the existing power structure.[60] Jesus' saying "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning" (Lk 10.18) is interpreted to mean that "the Satanic lordship that had dominated the old eon was collapsing".[61] This saying of Jesus does not indicate that he was a man with an apocalyptic imagination but that Jesus saw the minjung movement emerging in the concrete form. The dispatch of Jesus' disciples with the mission to cast out demons is also interpreted as Jesus giving them power to fight against the old rule. In this sense, the dispatch of the disciples symbolises the spread of the minjung movement.[62] Ahn asserts that Herod became perplexed (Lk 9.7-9) because Jesus' act of exorcism could have subverted the existing social and political system.[63] Thus, according to Ahn, Jesus was not a mere exorcist and his exorcistic activity was the concrete manifestation of his minjung movement.

Ahn argues that the story of Jesus' healing the Gerasene demoniac (Mk 5.1-20 *pars.*), together with his exorcism in Mk 1.21ff, shows the typical character of Jesus' exorcism.[64] When Jesus came to Gerasene, he met a man with an unclean spirit who

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[58] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] *Ibid.*

[63] *Ibid.*

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

lived among the tombs. Seeing Jesus, he came and bowed down before Jesus, shouting "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me" (Mk 5.7). Jesus asked his name and the demoniac responded: "My name is Legion; for we are many" (v. 9b). The unclean spirits begged Jesus not to send them out of the country but to send them into the swine (vv. 11-12). When Jesus gave them permission, the unclean spirits entered the herd of two thousand swine and rushed into the sea, drowning all of them. Ahn pays attention to the use of the word "legion" in the response of the demoniac.[65] He observes that it was a military term designating a Roman military unit with the number of soldiers ranging between six thousand and ten thousand. Ahn thinks that these unclean spirits have something to do with the Roman army.[66] Ahn explains that, if that is so, they must have been the Roman military unit stationed in the region of Decapolis. The petition of the unclean spirits to send them into the herd of swine symbolises the surrender of the Roman army and their effort to survive.[67] This petition of the unclean spirits could have originated from the Jewish religious culture that regarded the Gentiles and the swine as "impure". What the petition conveys is the message that the suitable place for the Roman army is not the human body but the swine.[68] Although Jesus accepts the petition, the Legion is finally destroyed, for the swine are drowned into the sea.

According to Ahn, this story expresses the wish of minjung concerning the fate of the Roman conquerors.[69] He explains that the demon-possession was a phenomenon of schizophrenia affecting the Jewish people colonised and dominated by Roman empire. Thus the way to regain selfhood is to expel the demons from him.[70] The demoniac who suffered from schizophrenia and lived among the tombs represents the people of Israel who suffered under the domination of the Roman army. When Jesus faced them, the Roman military forces were expelled and the people of Israel regained their self-

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[65] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

[66] *Ibid.*

[67] *Ibid.*

[68] *Ibid.*

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

identity.[71] Ahn insists that the response of the people of the village confirms this interpretation. The village people came to Jesus and asked him to leave the region. Ahn argues that this request of the village people had political implications in that they were afraid of the possible persecution by the Roman army. Thus they wanted to expel Jesus instead.[72]

Drawing on these interpretations, Ahn argues that the story reflects the climax of the minjung movement.[73] This movement is directly related to the coming of the Kingdom of God and the concrete form of its coming is Jesus' act of exorcism. By identifying Satan with the Roman empire, the story demythologised the Satan.[74] By connecting the Roman empire with a herd of swine, the story exposes the sentiments of the people of Israel against the Roman empire, for swine symbolise the dirtiest thing.[75] Thus Jesus' minjung movement is perceived to be the confrontation with the Roman power.[76]

The fact that Satan recognised Jesus first and begged him reflects minjung's belief in the superiority of Jesus over the power of the Romans. Ahn interprets the Legion's request to be sent into the swine as a satirical criticism of the Roman colonisers who try to expand colonies by any means.[77] Jesus finally expels the Legion into a herd of swine which were drowned into the sea like the Egyptian soldiers who were drowned in the Red Sea.[78] The village people begged Jesus to leave the region not because they felt bitter about the loss of the swine but because they feared the possible retaliation by the Roman military forces.[79] In other words, the village people were afraid of the

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[71] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

[72] *Ibid.*

[73] *Ibid.*

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] *Ibid.* Cf. Paul Winter, *On the Trial of Jesus*, p. 129, who holds that the use of *legion* is linked with the anti-Roman attitude of the Jewish people.

[76] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 168.

[77] *Ibid.*

[78] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

[79] *Ibid.*

damage which could be inflicted upon them because of the spread of Jesus' anti-Roman minjung movement in the region.[80]

Jesus' Healing as Continuation of the Minjung Movement

Ahn notes that, after healing the sick, Jesus orders them to return to their family or to the village they once belonged to.[81] i) After healing the leper, Jesus orders him to go to the priest to show his body (Mk 1.43); ii) Jesus tells the paralytic to take his mat and go to his home (Mk 2.11); iii) To the Gerasene demoniac who wanted to follow Jesus after being cured, Jesus commands him to go to his home and to his friends (Mk 5.19); iv) Jesus orders the blind man at Bethsaida directly to his home (Mk 8.26).[82]

Ahn states that these stories show the recovery of human rights of the sick, who had been completely alienated from society, by sending back to where they once belonged to.[83] Ahn goes even further by saying that Jesus' command to return to their home cannot be limited to the restoration of the previous social status of the sick.[84] Ahn argues that "the sick were not only restored to their former life but they also gained a new life which was given as the result of the minjung movement."[85] He supports this perception by explaining the cases of healing leper and the Gerasene demoniac. First, In Mk 1.43-45, Jesus orders the leper to go and show himself to the priest and offer what Moses commanded as a testimony for his cleansing. But, the man went out and proclaimed the story, so Jesus could not re-enter the village. Ahn asserts that "the man carries out his vocation by starting minjung movement himself or by proclaiming the power of Jesus' minjung movement as manifested in his healing."[86]

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[80] *Ibid.*

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

[82] Ahn, *ibid.*, p. 161, includes the case of the haemorrhaging woman (Mk 5.24-34) but, after healing the woman, Jesus simply said to her to go in peace without specifying where to go. In the case of the blind man at Bethsaida, Jesus ordered him not to go to the village but go directly to his home (Mk 26b).

[83] Ahn, *ibid.*, p. 162.

[84] *Ibid.*

[85] *Ibid.*

[86] *Ibid.*

Thus, according to Ahn, Jesus could not enter the village because the village people rejected Jesus' entry because of their own safety. Secondly, after healing the Gerasene demoniac, Jesus ordered him to go and tell his friends what the Lord had done for him (Mk 5.19). But, the man proclaimed what Jesus did in the region of Decapolis (Mk 5.20). Ahn maintains that the village people wanted Jesus to leave the region for the same reason.[87] According to Ahn, the village people were those who accepted their life under the Roman colonial power as unavoidable reality.[88] On the contrary, the man who was once demon-possessed wanted to follow Jesus. But, Jesus commands him to return home to his friends. Ahn rejects the interpretation of this as a command to return to the society where he once belonged because Jesus commanded him to tell the story to the people and he proclaimed the story in the region of Decapolis.[89] Ahn thinks that there is a continuity between what Jesus commanded and what the man did in the region of Decapolis, which indicates the continuation of minjung event.[90] What the man did in the region of Decapolis was the expansion of minjung movement.[91]

Problem of Minjung Understanding of Jesus' Healing Activity

a) *The Minjung's Initiative*

It seems to be difficult to characterise Jesus' healing activity either as collective minjung event or as anti-Roman minjung revolt. Ahn rejects the formula 'Jesus healed the sick' on the ground that it tends to relegate the sick to being the object of Jesus' healing event and dehistoricises the historical nature of Jesus' healing events. However, this argument is not persuasive at all. First, the observation that the formula 'Jesus healed the sick' was designed to highlight Jesus' identity as the Christ seems to be arbitrary. It is difficult to accept the logic that the Gospel writers' report about Jesus' healing is linked with his Christological claim, for it is not clear whether the purpose of

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[87] *Ibid.*

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

[89] *Ibid.*

[90] *Ibid.*

[91] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

the Gospel writers in reporting his healing was to present Jesus as the Christ. When Ahn himself argues that during the time of Jesus the healing power was not necessarily linked with the Messiahship, since there were many miracle workers. It is then not the Gospel writers who conceptualised the concrete historical events by reporting 'Jesus healed the sick'. It is Ahn himself who speculates and confuses the historical report with the Christological claim.

Secondly, it is ambiguous what Ahn means by 'initiative in the healing events'. He states that Jesus was surrounded by an anonymous crowd who sought *Jesus* for the cure of their diseases. Ahn explicitly states that the sick people sought him because they believed that Jesus could heal them. If not for the healing power of Jesus, what made the sick people seek Jesus? We should correct Ahn's assumption by posing the following question: *Would the sick have sought Jesus in such a desperate way without his miraculous healing power?* It is more convincing to argue that, if Jesus did not have the healing power, regardless of the desperateness of the sick, there could have been no miraculous events. Thus, the subject of the healing events is definitely Jesus and he liberated the sick from their diseases. To support our argument, we need to examine some biblical evidence in more detail.

Mk 1.23-26/ Lk 4.31-37. Ahn simply ignores the fact that actually it was Jesus himself who prompted the sick to come to him. The first healing event in Mk is the healing of the man with an unclean spirit in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Mk 1.23-26/ Lk 4.31-37). The unclean spirit approaches Jesus first. Jesus rebukes the unclean spirit to come out of the man and is cured. Immediately after this healing event, his fame began to spread through surrounding region of Galilee (Mk 1.28). What we observe, first of all, is that the sick person plays no part in this story. The dialogue is between Jesus and the unclean spirit and the sick man is silent in the story. It is Jesus who takes action to cast out the unclean spirit. People brought "all who were sick or possessed with demons" to Jesus (Mk 1.33) on the same day. Mark also reports that the whole city gathered around the door of the house where Jesus was staying. It indicates that Jesus' fame as an exorcist and healer spread very quickly throughout the surrounding region of Galilee, which made people, whether sick or not, come to see Jesus.[92] It then is proper to argue that the subsequent healings of Jesus must be seen

against this background. That is to say, it was the fame of Jesus as an exorcist and healer that the sick came to Jesus requesting healing. If Jesus was not perceived to be someone with special powers to heal, it might have been pointless for the sick to come to Jesus in the first place.

Mk 3.1-6/ Mt 12.9-14/ Lk 6.6-11. The healing of the man with a withered hand (Mk 3.1-6) testifies to this. Jesus entered a synagogue on the Sabbath and there happened to be a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees in the synagogue were watching Jesus to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath again (v. 3). It would have been unimaginable for the sick man to request Jesus to heal on the Sabbath in the synagogue in the presence of the Pharisees. Jesus thus asks the man to come forward. After questioning the Pharisees about the lawful thing to do on the Sabbath, Jesus commands him to stretch out his hand and it is restored. In this healing story, the sick man is silent. It is not possible to argue that the sick person took the initiative in demanding the cure of his disease. We cannot fail to note that it is certainly Jesus' initiative that this healing story emphasies.

Mk 2.1-12/ Mt 9.2-8/ Lk 5.17-26. These pericopae records the healing of the paralytic. When Jesus was teaching at a house in Capernaum, a paralytic was brought to Jesus by four men. As they were unable to bring the sick man to Jesus because of the *ochlos*, they dug a hole in the roof and let down the mat on which the paralytic was laying. Seeing their faith, Jesus announced that his sins were forgiven (v. 5). By announcing the forgiveness of sins, Jesus revealed that he was acting as the one with divine authority. Refuting the scribes who considered Jesus' announcement as blasphemy, Jesus disclosed that he announced the forgiveness of sins to make them know that he as the Son of Man has the authority to forgive sins on earth (v. 10). What is reported in this healing narrative is certainly not the picture of Jesus who simply complies to the request of the sick person.

Mk 6.7-13/ Mt 10.5-15/ Lk 9.1-6. These pericopae records the mission of the twelve. Mark records that, when Jesus dispatched his disciples to preach the Gospel, Jesus gave them power and authority over the unclean spirits and diseases. The mission

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[92] In Matthew, it is reported that Jesus began his ministry in Galilee "teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people" (Mt 4.23). As the result of Jesus' ministry, his fame spread throughout all Syria, and people brought to Jesus "all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs,

of the disciples had two aspects: proclaiming the gospel of repentance and casting out the demons and healing the sick. What we observe here is that Jesus can authorise his disciples with the power to cast out demons. His disciples cast out demons and healed the sick because they were given authority by Jesus. It is not the initiatives of minjung but the authority received from Jesus that enabled Jesus' disciples to perform the healing ministry. The image of Jesus that we obtain from this story is not of someone who has only functional power which will be realised only when it is met by the will of minjung but of someone who possesses the absolute power over demons and diseases.

Jn 5.1-9. When Jesus went up to Jerusalem, he went to a pool called Bethzatha by the Sheep Gate. There Jesus found a man who had been paralysed thirty-eight years. Jesus asked him if he wanted to be made well (v. 6). The sick man did not reply directly, but deplored the fact that there was no one who could put him into the pool when it stirred. Without further dialogue, Jesus healed the man by commanding him to stand up, take his mat and walk (v. 9). This healing story presents Jesus as the one who takes the initiative in healing the sick man. Jesus approaches the sick man voluntarily and expresses his concern about his health. The sick man does not request Jesus to heal him but deplores the absence of a helper, which alludes to the fact that he does not know who Jesus is. Although Ahn asserts that the request always comes on the side of the minjung, the sick man in this story appears completely passive and expresses only self-resignation even when Jesus approached him.

Mk 5.21-24/ Mt 9.18-19/ Lk 8.41-42. The healing of Jairus' daughter offers a good example. One of the synagogue leaders named Jairus came to Jesus, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly to heal his daughter. Jesus did not reject his request but went with him to heal the girl. What we notice here is that the synagogue leader came to Jesus when his daughter was at the point of death. His repeated requests prove the urgency of the situation. While still on the way, someone from the house of the synagogue leader came to tell them death of the girl. Jesus encouraged the man to have faith, went to the man's house and healed the girl. In this healing episode, Jesus did not reject the request of the synagogue leader to heal his daughter. The synagogue leader was not a minjung but belonged to the ruling class. It then becomes difficult to argue that Jesus' healing ministry represents the minjung event. It will be more correct to say

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epileptics, and paralytics" (Mt 4.24). Based on this report, we can say that Jesus' fame which spread

that Jesus did not reject any sick people who came to him for help regardless of their social status.

Mt 8.5-13/ Lk 7.1-10. In these pericopae, Jesus even accepts the request of a centurion to heal his servant. When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion approached Jesus asking him to heal his slave. Jesus readily accepts the request and says that he would come and heal his slave. The centurion is a military commander of the Roman colonial army. It then is difficult to generalise about the nature of Jesus' healing ministry as the minjung event.

Mk 5.34/ Mt 9.22/ Lk 8.48. Jesus made this announcement after healing the haemorrhaging woman. This woman suffered from haemorrhage for twelve years. During those years she tried hard to get well, spending all her money for treatment. Without money, she found herself without any hope of getting well and unable to remove the social stigma associated with her disease. She then heard about Jesus (Mk 5.27). She became convinced that she would be made well by simply touching Jesus' cloak,[93] and went into action. When she touched Jesus' cloak, her haemorrhage stopped immediately. Jesus stopped and identified the woman among the crowd, announcing to her "Your faith has made you well." Hence we find it difficult to argue that the haemorrhaging woman triggered a miracle by taking the initiative in the healing event.[94] It must be recognised that the woman dared to break the social barrier by coming to Jesus in public and touching his garment. Jesus accepted her behaviour, thus subverting the contemporary social norms of behaviour. However, we cannot say that the will of the woman was the cause of the healing event. If we have to accept the argument that the healing was a minjung event in which the sick take the initiative with Jesus playing the passive part, we also have to explain why her desperate will to get out of the miserable situation had failed during the twelve years. Here, we may point out that what the haemorrhaging woman heard about Jesus was significant in the healing story. Jesus' fame as a healer[95] imbued her with renewed hope. It then is more

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throughout Syria was that of a healer. It was Jesus' fame as a healer that made people come to Jesus.

[93] Cf. Hooker, *The Gospel according to St Mark*, p. 148, maintains that the reports about Jesus was the source of the woman's confidence.

[94] Cf. Kinukawa, *Women and Jesus in Mark. A Japanese Feminist Perspective*, pp. 29-50.

[95] Craig L. Blomberg, "'Your Faith Has Made You Whole': The Evangelical Liberation Theology of Jesus," in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ*. Ed. By J. Green and M. Turner (Grand Rapids:

correct to argue that Jesus' healing power prompted her into action than to argue that the sick woman mobilised her will to get well and triggered the healing miracle.

We need to explain the content of her faith. Ahn asserts that this faith does not carry any Christological implication. Ahn states that "there is no such assumption that Jesus is able to heal because he is the Christ."[96] Ahn admits that the sick had the faith that Jesus could heal the disease but he understands it to mean that the sick had the self-confidence that she would be liberated from the disease by encountering Jesus.[97] Here again, we may question the source of the self-confidence. We may say that what the sick hear about Jesus becomes the source of their self-confidence. It then is simply incorrect to argue that Jesus played only a passive role in the healing stories, complying only to the request of the minjung. In the present pericope, the haemorrhaging woman came to have the strong conviction[98] that Jesus could heal her. The source of such a firm conviction was what she heard about Jesus. The faith of the woman was that Jesus could save her from the miserable situation in which she suffered physical illness and social ostracism. Although we cannot say that her faith is expressed Christologically, it is obvious that Jesus or Jesus' healing power was the content of the faith.

Lk 8.48; Mk 10.52. When Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, they were stopped by the cry of a blind beggar named Bartimaeus. Hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, Bartimaeus cried out to Jesus to heal him, calling him "Son of David" twice. Although his disciples tried to silence the blind beggar, Jesus called Bartimaeus to him and said, "What do you want me to do for you?" (Mk 10.51). Bartimaeus did not lose the chance to ask Jesus to heal his blindness. This dialogue between Jesus and the blind beggar Bartimaeus makes it clear that the subject of healing is Jesus. Jesus is ready to do something for the blind beggar. After this dialogue, Jesus announces "Your faith has made you well" (Mk 10.52). The story reports that the content of Bartimaeus' faith

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Eerdmans, 1994), p. 77. He rightly notes that nothing in the pericope suggests that the haemorrhaging woman began to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. She did not seem to have the knowledge about Jesus' identity, but her whole concern was to get well.

[96] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee,* p. 160.

[97] *Ibid.*

[98] It is observed that she "kept saying" that "if I but touch his clothes, I will be made well" (Mk 5.28). Cf. Kinukawa, *op cit.*, p. 41.

is the faith that Jesus have the power to cure him. The desperate cry of Bartimaeus to stop Jesus testifies to this observation for there would have been no reason for him to call out Jesus for help if he had not heard about Jesus' healing power.

Mk 5.36. It is striking to observe that in this pericope Jesus encourages the sick 'to have faith'. When some people from the house of the synagogue leader came to inform death of the girl, they said not to trouble Jesus any more (Mk 5.35 *par*). As the girl died, there would have existed no reason for the synagogue leader to request Jesus to come to his house. Jesus then encourages the man not to fear but to have faith. To have faith in this situation is to believe that his daughter will live again. The faith in this story has nothing to do with the will of the sick or of minjung. Jesus demanded the synagogue leader to believe in both his healing power and the resuscitation of the girl's life.

Mt 8.5-13/ Lk 7.1-10. These pericopae records the healing of a centurion's servant. In Matthew, the centurion himself comes to Jesus to request healing of his servant, whereas in Luke the centurion first sends the elders of the people and then his friends to Jesus to deliver his request. When Jesus accepted the request, the centurion changed his mind and said, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed" (Mt 8.8/ Lk 7.6-7). The centurion refers to his own authority to command to explain the reason for him to request Jesus to just say the word. Jesus marvelled at the faith of the centurion and announced that it would be done according to his faith. The servant was healed at that very hour. We can easily find the clue to explain the content of the centurion's faith in the centurion's own remark. The centurion believed that, as his earthly authority as a centurion is obeyed by his men, Jesus has divine authority and his word will be enough to heal his servant. It is obviously a faith in Jesus' healing authority.

In summing up, we have examined the biblical passages to show that the arguments of minjung theologians have little groound to stand. Jesus' healing ministry is not the projection of minjung's potentiality. Instead, the healing stories clearly present Jesus as someone who possesses healing power, takes the initiative in healing and accepts even the requests of the non-minjung.

b) *Jesus' Inability* (Mk 6.1-6/ Mt 13.54-58/ Lk 4.16-30)

Minjung theologians refer to Jesus' inability to perform any miraculous deeds without the initiative on the part of minjung based. However, the argument is incorrect. First, it is doubtful whether we can describe the people who took offence at Jesus in his hometown as minjung. The setting was in the synagogue and the people gathered to observe the Sabbath (Mk 6.2). The people who could attend the synagogue to observe the Sabbath were legitimate members of Israel. They certainly did not belong to the class of minjung as described in minjung theology. Secondly, it is not clear whether the lack of faith on the part of the people in Jesus' hometown incapacitated Jesus to perform any deed of power. The text does not make it explicitly clear that Jesus was incapacitated by the lack of initiative on the part of the minjung. It seems significant to note that the people present in the synagogue refer to "such miracles as these performed by his hands" (v. 2b). It will be more appropriate to interpret 'such powerful deeds' as referring to the deeds that Jesus performed in the synagogue.[99] Seeing that their words in vv. 2b-3 were made in response to Jesus' teaching in the synagogue, it will be possible to say that Jesus taught and healed in the synagogue. In v. 5, Jesus is said to have laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them *there*. In Matthew, it is reported that "Jesus did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief" (Mt 13.58). It is evident that Jesus did *some* deeds of power there in the synagogue. Jesus was not incapacitated by the unbelief of the people but decided not to perform *many* deeds of power.

c) *Jesus' Exorcism as Anti-Roman Minjung Revolt*

Ahn's explanation of Jesus' exorcistic activity as an anti-Roman minjung movement shows his tendency to dehistoricise the historical reports of the Gospel writers and to interpret them symbolically. Ahn interprets the episode in Gerasene as an instance that typically shows Jesus' minjung movement against the Romans. However, this interpretation is hardly acceptable.

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[99] Hooker, *The Gospel according to St Mark*, p. 152, notes that at first the whole congregation recognised Jesus "as the agent of a supernatural power," though their astonishment turned into disbelief. If this is so, Jesus must have performed the mighty works in the presence of the congregation.

Ahn maintains that the word *legion* designates the Roman army stationed in Decapolis. Although the term *legion* was a Latin loan word (*Legio*) designating a Roman army unit consisting of about 6,000 men, it is difficult to argue that the use of the term in this pericope refers to a specific *legion* in Decapolis. Rather, as the word was well known to Jewish people dominated by the Romans,[100] it could have acquired a wider range of meaning in Palestine society among the Jewish people. The evidence for this observation is the phrase "because we are many" in the speech of the demons (Mk 5.9). Graham Twelftree asserts that the phrase is related to the demon's disclosure of its nature.[101] If the demon disclosed its nature by using the term *legion*, it simply symbolises the plural number of the demon. In other words, the term *legion* was used as a synonym of "many". If the word was used to refer to a Roman legion in a specific region, it was unnecessary to add the phrase 'because we are many' for the term itself was enough to make the hearer picture a large number of soldiers.

Ahn seems to have bought Gerd Theissen's transference-theory.[102] However, this interpretation faces two difficulties: First, if the Jewish people expressed their wish to expel the Roman colonial power through the story of Jesus' exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac, it becomes difficult to explain the way the story ends. The very people who wished to expel the Roman colonial power expelled Jesus instead. If they feared the retaliation of the Romans, how can we accept the story as the manifestation of Jewish people's wish to be liberated from the Roman colonial power? According to Ahn, the Jewish people chose to live under Roman colonial rule.[103] Secondly, it becomes

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[100] Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1993), pp. 76-77.

[101] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

[102] Gerd Theissen, *The First Followers of Jesus. A Sociological Analysis of the Early Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1978), pp. 101-102. According to Theissen, the word "transference" is used in psychoanalysis, referring to the "shift of a drive to another goal which is not in fact directly connected with the original goal." p. 101.

[103] We find the same difficulty in Gerd Theissen's explanation of this pericope. Theissen, basing on his transference-theory, argues that the aggression of the Jewish people against the Romans is transferred to demons. cf. G. Theissen, *op. cit.*, p. 101. "The demons who live in the herd of swine behave like an occupying power. They speak Latin, present themselves as 'legion', and like the Romans have only one wish: to be allowed in the country. The way in which they are drowned in the lake along with the swine corresponds to the hostile thoughts directed against the Romans by the Jewish people: they would dearly like to see the Romans driven into the sea." *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102. The difficulty with this argument is that it cannot explain the hostile attitude of the Jewish people against Jesus.

difficult to explain other stories of Jesus' exorcism. During his earthly ministry, Jesus healed the demoniac in the synagogue (Mk 1.21-28), the Syrophoenician woman's daughter (Mk 7.24-30) and the epileptic boy (Mk 9.14-29). It is not possible to characterise Jesus' exorcism in these cases as the minjung movement against the Romans.

I. 3. Jesus and the Table Community Movement

In minjung theology, it is argued that Jesus' solidarity with the minjung is expressed in his sharing movement, i.e., the table community movement. According to minjung theologians, Jesus not only explained the kingdom of God with parables employing meal metaphor but he showed its reality by actually sharing food with people. Thus Jesus' table fellowship is interpreted as an acted parable of the Kingdom of God[104] and as a concrete manifestation of the kingdom of God movement. Our concern in this section is to examine the interpretation of Jesus' table fellowship in minjung theology and to evaluate whether it reflects Jesus' concern for the poor and exploited *min*.

Kingdom of God and the Meal Metaphor

Minjung theologians maintain that the Kingdom of God should be understood as the social reality in which people share food with each other. This is the symbolic act of visualising the liberation of minjung from their suffering. The meal metaphor that Jesus used in his teaching on the kingdom of God is significant in bringing out the reality of his message. Ahn refers to Jesus' parables in which the Kingdom of God is described in terms of table community, i.e., the eschatological feast (Mt 8.11)[105] and the great

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[104] Cf. N. Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1967), p. 102.

[105] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 114, holds that this logion of Jesus refers to the event that the whole world become one, overcoming the Jewish nationalism: "I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (v. 11). Ahn draws our attention to the fact that the people gathered in the kingdom of heaven will "eat together." The significance of the gathering of the people of the world is the event of "eating together." Ahn argues that the presentation of the Kingdom of God as the table fellowship in which the people of the world take part carries particular significance in that Jesus announces this to the people of Israel in the context of their sufferings under exploitation and oppression by the Roman colonial power. p. 117.

Although the observation that the Kingdom of God is characterised as the table community is correct, it seems wrong to connect the image of table fellowship with the exploitive and oppressive situation at the time of Jesus. The immediate pericope of Mk 8.5-13 is the story of Jesus' healing a centurion's servant. When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came and asked Jesus to heal his servant who was lying paralysed at home. Jesus said to the centurion that he would go and heal his

dinner (Lk 14.15-24/ Mt 22.1-14).[106] Ahn notes that in the Lord's Prayer the coming of the kingdom of God is connected with the daily bread (Lk 11.2-3 par).[107] Jesus' announcement at the Last Supper also presupposes that drinking and eating are part of the reality in the kingdom of God: "I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until

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servant, but the centurion expressed great respect for Jesus by mentioning his unworthiness to have Jesus at his house and also revealed great faith in Jesus by saying that Jesus' words would be enough to heal his servant. The logion about the table community follows after his commendation of the centurion's faith: "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith" (v. 10). Here Jesus not only expresses his appreciation of the faith of the centurion but also compares it with that of the people of Israel. If the 'many' in v. 11 refers to the people of the world, as Ahn interprets it, then the audience of Jesus would have certainly thought that the Gentile centurion represented the 'many'. Moreover, Jesus announces that 'the sons of the kingdom' will be excluded from the table fellowship in the kingdom (v. 12). The Semitic expression 'the sons of the kingdom' refers to the Jewish descendants of the patriarchs. Then Jesus strikingly announces here that the Gentiles like the centurion will inherit God's kingdom, while the Jewish descendants who should have inherited the kingdom will be excluded from it. This reading of the pericope causes problem for Ahn's interpretation of the kingdom of God. First, Jesus commended the centurion for his great faith. The centurion is a commander of the Roman colonial army. According to the pericope, the people who will gather to have table fellowship with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the Gentiles like the centurion of the Roman army. Then it becomes difficult to find the significance of this logion against the exploitive and oppressive historical situation at the time of Jesus. Secondly, a contrast is made between the Gentiles and the Jewish descendants, not between the minjung and the non-minjung in the society. Those who will be participating the table fellowship in the Kingdom of God are not designated as minjung, but the Gentiles like the centurion who obviously do not belong to minjung.

[106] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 117. Ahn maintains that in this parable those who have possessions are contrasted with the poor and the alienated in society in connection with the coming of the Kingdom of God. He does not interpret this as a teaching about the partiality of the Kingdom of God. Rather he perceives the Kingdom of God as a reality which is open to all people, though the alienated in the world become the subject of the kingdom. According to Ahn, what is important in the parable is the description of the Kingdom of God as the table community.

Although the perception of the Kingdom of God as the table community is valid, however, it must not be overlooked that the host of the table community is not the minjung. Ahn does not explain what he means by 'the subject of the kingdom'. But, it should be clearly pointed out that the minjung in the parable appear as the beneficiaries of the occasion.

[107] Ahn, *A Story of Minjung Theology*, p. 249, describes the Lord's Prayer as the logo-song for Jesus' Kingdom of God movement. According to Ahn, the prayer for the coming of God's kingdom was the cry of the minjung, and it is interpreted as their aspiration for the incarnation of God, who became flesh among us, into the Kingdom of God movement. He argues that we should perceive God intervening into the minjung events today not on the spiritual dimension but on the material dimension. Thus Ahn pays attention to the prayer for the daily bread, which again confirms the close connection between the Kingdom of God and the material, i.e., the (communal) eating. The prayer for the Kingdom of God and the prayer for the bread go together, so the reality of the Kingdom of God is perceived as a reality in which bread is shared together. However, there arises a question: who provides the daily bread? It is evident that the poor minjung cannot be the provider of the daily bread, for, if they can obtain their daily bread for themselves, there would be no reason for them to pray for daily bread. If the Kingdom of God is related to the provision of daily bread, it should be the ruler of the kingdom who has to take care of the welfare of his people. If the Kingdom of God is connected with the solution of the problem of daily bread, the prayer for the Kingdom of God can not be interpreted as the prayer for an alternative kingdom where the *mokmin* spirit is practised in the concrete reality. Then, the prayer for the daily bread represents the expectation of minjung for the implementation of *mokmin* spirit on the part of the rulers, the true earthly representatives of God.

that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (Mk 14.25). Drawing on these passages, Jae-Soon Park argues that the kingdom of God is directly connected with solving the problem of hunger, i.e., the problem of bread.[108]

Critical Reflections on the Characterisation of Jesus' Table Fellowship in Minjung Theology

Minjung theologians do not hesitate in characterising Jesus' table fellowship as one of the best examples of Jesus' minjung movement for Jesus had table fellowship with minjung. Ahn refers to Lk 7.33-34 as the most obvious evidence for Jesus' table fellowship with minjung: "For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon'; the Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'" Ahn observes three things in this passage. First, Jesus ate and drank with so-called sinners; secondly, Jesus' sharing meal with sinners was the concrete act on the part of Jesus to disclose that he was their friend; and thirdly, Jesus differentiated himself from John the Baptist in that Jesus showed no gap between him and minjung by eating and drinking with them, whereas John the Baptist alienated himself from minjung whom he regarded as merely audience of his preaching.[109] Ahn's observation represents the basic perception of minjung theologians concerning the significance of Jesus' table fellowship. Jesus had table fellowship with minjung and by doing so Jesus did not appear as the leader of the minjung but simply showed solidarity with them. Behind this observation, we can identify the consistent theological premise of minjung theologians concerning Jesus' social status and the nature of his ministry. Minjung theologians refer to the table fellowship with sinners (Mk 2.13-17 *par*), Jesus' feeding the five thousand (Mk 6.30-44 *pars*) and the Last Supper as examples of Jesus' sharing movement with minjung. Thus, we need to examine these meal accounts first to identify the historical character of Jesus' table fellowship.

a) *Jesus' Table Fellowship with Tax Collectors and Sinners* (Mk 2.16 *pars*)

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[108] Jae-Soon Park, "Jesus' Table Community Movement and the Church," p. 530.

[109] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 139.

Minjung theologians maintain that Jesus' table fellowship with minjung is the pivotal meal event that determines the historical character of Jesus' table fellowship. According to minjung theologians, Mk 2.13-17 discloses the nature of Jesus' table community movement and they argue that other meal accounts should be interpreted in the light of it. Two aspects are emphasised in this connection: first, tax-collectors and sinners were minjung and secondly, Jesus' table fellowship with them was perceived to be revolutionary during his time.[110] Jae-Soon Park asserts that Jesus' table fellowship with those people was a provocative act that broke the religious, social and political barriers because "at that time tax collectors were acting as agents for the national enemy of Roman colonial power and sinners were poor minjung."[111] Byung-Mu Ahn also explains that Jesus' table fellowship in the house of Levi was an act that contravened the social order.[112] He maintains that Jesus' act of sharing food constituted a challenge to the social order and the religious system that had justified the existing social order.[113] Thus, in minjung theology, Jesus' table fellowship with the alleged minjung is perceived to be a significant part of his minjung movement that aimed to bring a new era in which people share food.[114]

What we need to identify in the account of the feast is the host for the occasion. Although Park alludes that the host of the feast was Jesus, it is more correct to regard Levi as the host for the occasion. The Markan version of the story does not state clearly who the host was but, according to the Lukan version, it is reported that Levi provided the banquet at his house for Jesus (Lk 5.29). Ahn states that it was at the house of Levi that Jesus had table fellowship, thus supporting the view that Levi was the host for the occasion.[115] If it is true that Levi was the host of the feast, it offers a significant clue in illuminating the historical character of Jesus' table fellowship. Apart from the non-minjung status of Levi, it is certain that he was a man with material

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[110] J. Park, *op cit.*, p. 535.

[111] *Ibid.*

[112] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 122.

[113] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

[114] *Ibid.*

[115] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

power enough to host many tax collectors and sinners on this occasion. Levi's house had enough room to host many guests at one time. We find it difficult to reconcile what we observe in the story with the argument of minjung theologians that Jesus' table fellowship represents Jesus' Kingdom of God movement which symbolises the liberation of the poor minjung from their sufferings in poverty.

It is certainly correct to interpret Jesus' sharing a meal with those who were socially denounced and condemned as a revolutionary act. Jesus made a fundamental challenge to the existing social and religious order through eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners. However, it is an overstatement to describe Jesus' table fellowship with such people as minjung movement.

b) *The Miracle of Feeding Five Thousand* (Mk 6.30-44 *pars*)

Minjung theologians regard the account of the miracle of feeding the five thousand as the paragon for Jesus' eating-together movement.[116] While Byung-Mu Ahn acknowledges the historicity of the miracle,[117] Jae-Soon Park rejects the miraculous multiplication of the five loaves of bread and the two fish. Although both Ahn and Park seek the significance of the story in Jesus' sharing the food with the hungry people, their interpretation of Jesus' sharing event differs in its emphasis.

Ahn emphasises the aspect of sharing food with minjung and explains that it affirms the fact that the Kingdom of God is unimaginable without connecting it with Jesus' table fellowship with minjung.[118] However, removing the miraculous element from the event of feeding, Park emphasises the aspect of communal meal among the hungry minjung.[119] According to Park, the story "tells the moving experience of liberation that the hungry minjung experienced when they communally shared food with each other. . . and also shows the excitement of the abundant life and the communal solidarity

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[116] Cf. J. Park, "Jesus' Table Community Movement and the Church," *AJT* 7 (1993), p. 70. He asserts that "the story illustrates most fittingly the characteristic of the table community movement initiated by the minjung."

[117] Ahn. *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 86.

[118] *Ibid.*, pp. 86, 156.

[119] J. Park, "Jesus' Table Community Movement and the Church," p. 70, takes the story as a metaphorical story and rejects a literal reading of the story.

experienced by sharing together."[120] He argues that, in the miracle story, Jesus as the giver is insignificant for what Jesus offered was only five loaves of bread and two fish.[121] As he rejects the miraculous material multiplication of five loaves of bread and two fish, Park does not accept Jesus' superhuman or miraculous ability. It is only the human hunger, the human pity and the communal excitement of sharing food that are expressed through the story.[122] According to Park, the people in the story experienced the excitement of justice, peace and joy by sharing their possessions and life with Jesus.[123]

Although Park's exposition seems appealing, it contains many problems which makes its acceptance difficult. First, he makes self-contradictory observations concerning the element of miracle in the story. Although he suggests that the element of miracle should not be counted in explaining the story, he also states that "it is not satisfactory to remove entirely the element of miracle from the story and simply try to explain it rationally."[124] The element of miracle that he wants to salvage in the story is the miracle of sharing the food.[125] Secondly, in this connection, it must be pointed out that the story does not describe a miracle of sharing among the hungry minjung. Park aserts that there was a miracle of sharing among the hungry minjung, but we detect easily that this interpretation lacks consistency. He explicitly states that the hungry minjung shared *their possessions* and life with Jesus who offered only five loaves of bread and two fish.[126] If there were no miracle of multiplication but only the miracle of sharing of their possessions, it is absolutely incorrect to characterise the people as hungry minjung. How can we classify the people who had possessions to share and

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[120] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[121] *Ibid.*

[122] *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

[123] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[124] *Ibid.*

[125] Cf. B. Ahn, "Jerusalem Temple System and Jesus' Confrontation," *Shinhak Sasang* (The Theological Thought) vol. 58 (3, 1987), p. 529, who also asserts that the primary task of the Jesus movement is the realisation of the sharing community, and characterises the miracle of feeding the five thousand as a miracle of sharing that took place in the life of the minjung when the Jesus movement was spreading.

experience the abundant life by leaving the twelve baskets full of food as hungry minjung? We may assume that there were some people who had material possessions who were moved by Jesus' initiative in sharing even the little thing he possessed. But, Park maintains that such rational description of the scene does not convey "the original excitement and emotion of the story."[127] Instead, he alludes to the presence of men with possessions by eliciting the lesson from the fact that the person who has stored food must share them with hungry people dying of starvation.[128] Park thus actually confirms that there were people with possessions in the crowd who spontaneously shared their food.[129] Park may say that when he uses the expression of "miracle of sharing" he does not assume the presence of people with possessions but the sharing of "a small amount of insignificant, coarse food" by all.[130] If this is so, how can we explain the sharing of small amount of food by "all" without acknowledging the miracle of multiplication of the food? Thirdly, it is incorrect to assert that Jesus shared the little thing he possessed, i.e., the five loaves of bread and two fish, with the people. In all the versions of the story (Mt 14.13-21/ Mk 6.30-44/ Lk 9.10-17/ Jn 6.1-14), we are not given any hint that it was Jesus who possessed the five loaves of bread and two fish. In Jn 6.9, Andrew reports to Jesus that a boy has five barley loaves and two fish. It then becomes difficult to find the significance of the feeding miracles in the communal experience of food sharing. We need to read the story carefully to find out the significance of the story.

The first thing we need to identify is how Jesus is pictured in the story. To identify Jesus, it is necessary to explain first how he perceived the people. What we find in the story is that Jesus had compassion on the people and considered them to be 'like sheep without a shepherd'.[131] As Ahn observes, the description of people as 'sheep without a shepherd' appears in I Kgs 22.17 in the context of accusing the oppressive rule of King

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[126] J. Park, "Jesus' Table Community Movement and the Church," p. 71.

[127] *Ibid.*

[128] *Ibid.*

[129] *Ibid.*

[130] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[131] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 140.

Ahab.[132] The expression also appears in Ezek 34.2 which was given as "prophecy against the shepherds of Israel". Ezekiel rebuked the rulers of Israel for not feeding but oppressing and exploiting the sheep (vv. 2-4). In other words, the rulers were accused by the prophet for failing to guide the people, i.e., for lacking the *mokmin* spirit.[133] Ahn is certainly right in explaining that, by describing the crowd as sheep without a shepherd, Jesus was accusing the contemporary rulers for being oppressors and exploiters of the people.[134] Given this historical context, what could be the significance of Jesus' feeding the five thousand? It is evident in the story itself that by feeding people, Jesus proved himself to be their shepherd in contrast to the rulers of that time. As the duty of a shepherd is to feed the sheep, Jesus demonstrated that he fulfilled the duty of the shepherd as true ruler of the people. Not only had he compassion on the people but he actually practised the *mokmin* spirit by feeding the crowd.

c) *Lord's Supper* (Mk 14.22-25 *par*)

Jesus had his last supper with his disciples during the Passover feast in Jerusalem. While eating, Jesus revealed that he will be betrayed by one of the disciples and subsequently instituted the Lord's Supper. Here, we find a description of two different acts of sharing food: first, the Passover meal and secondly, the sharing of bread and wine which symbolise Jesus' body and blood.

Byung-Mu Ahn argues that Jesus' last supper was an event that he demonstrated the Kingdom of God as the reality in which people eat together.[135] According to Ahn, Jesus shares the meal with only a small number of his disciples for they met at a secret place.[136] Ahn does not connect Jesus' last supper with the Passover feast for the story presents the scene as a solemn occasion before they face death, not as a festive

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[132] *Ibid.*

[133] Cf. Hooker, *The Gospel according to St Mark*, p. 165.

[134] Ahn., *Jesus of Galilee.*, p. 123.

[135] *Ibid.*

[136] *Ibid.*

occasion to celebrate the Passover.[137] Ahn pays attention to Jesus' saying "I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (Mk 14.25 *pars*). He observes two things in this verse. First, Jesus indicates that it is his last supper and secondly, Jesus affirms again that the Kingdom of God is characterised by eating together.[138] However, Ahn does not explain the significance of Jesus' sharing meal with his disciples in such a sensitive moment. Although Ahn does not want to connect the last supper with the Passover feast, it is more appropriate to place the meal within the context of the Passover meal. It is wrong to deny the nature of the last supper as the Passover meal simply on the ground that there is no mention of the Passover lamb on the table. On the contrary, by reporting that the last supper was eaten "on the first day of Unleavened Bread when the Passover lamb is sacrificed" (Mk 14.12), Mark explicitly placed the last meal in the context of the Passover. The question of the disciples clearly indicates that they were preparing the Passover meal for the group: "Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" (Mk 14.12).

Ahn does not explain why Jesus shared the Passover meal with only a small number of his disciples at that crucial time when launching the final confrontation with the ruling class to bring in the Kingdom of God. If the table community movement should represent Jesus' minjung movement, isn't it more natural to expect the gathering of minjung on the eve of that crucial time?

The other thing that must be pointed out concerning Jesus' sharing the Passover meal with his disciples is the location of the occasion. Ahn seems to focus on the theological significance of the table fellowship *per se* but he does not pay attention to the historical factors related to the table fellowship. We need to pay due attention to the place where Jesus and his disciples had the Passover meal. Mark reports that the Passover meal was prepared at a house in the city of Jerusalem by an anonymous "owner of the house" (Mk 14.14). The host of the Passover meal was a person who owned a house in the city of Jerusalem in which there was a "large room" (v. 15) to be used for guests. The fact that the person prepared the Passover meal for his guests indicates that he was a rich man. If this is so, it becomes evident that Jesus associated

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[137] *Ibid.*

with the rich man and enjoyed his hospitality. The picture of Jesus who sits at the rich man's house to share Passover meal with his disciples is not harmonised with that of Jesus who was preparing a minjung revolt.[139]

At any rate, it must be pointed out that it is not possible to characterise Jesus' last supper as the summary of all Jesus' meal events during his public ministry.[140] If we are to characterise Jesus' eating the Passover meal with his disciples as the culmination of his sharing movement, Jesus should be the host and provider of the occasion. In this particular event, it was not Jesus but "the owner of the house" who prepared the meal. Jesus and his companions simply visited the house and enjoyed the meal.

While eating the Passover meal, Jesus gave bread and wine to his disciples and identified the bread and wine with his body and blood. As the sharing of bread and wine was directly connected with the impending death of Jesus, the latter must be interpreted in terms of the Passover meal. The feast of Passover commemorates the liberation of people of Israel from the bondage in Egypt. During the Passover festival, people sacrifice a lamb for their sins. Jesus interprets his death as a death "for many" (Mk 14.24). It then is safe to understand Jesus' death as a redemptive death.

Jae-soon Park emphasises the need to connect Jesus' death with the table community movement.[141] He argues that Jesus' death is "the perfect realisation of the table community movement"[142] in that Jesus went to the point of sharing his body and blood and in that Jesus is present, through his resurrection, in the continuation of the

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[138] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

[139] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

[140] *Contra* Dong-Sun Kim, *The Bread for Today and the Bread for Tomorrow: The Ethical Significance of the Lord's Supper in the Korean Context* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The University of Edinburgh, 1993), p. 91.

[141] J. Park, "Jesus' Table Community Movement and the Church," p. 73. He states: "Since Jesus' death could be easily identified as the death of the sacrificial lamb at the last supper, his death was dogmatically defined as the redemptive death. However, the death of Jesus at the Last Supper should *not only* be understood as the redemptive death. Rather his death needs to be understood in the light of the table community. . . Jesus' death should be understood in the light of his life and movement." *Ibid.*, 72-73. Here he seems to recognise the possibility to perceive Jesus' death as a redemptive death. But, by proposing to interpret Jesus' death in relation to his life and movement, he rejects the interpretation of Jesus' death as a vicarious death for many.

[142] Park, *ibid.*, p. 73.

table community movement.[143] However, it is difficult to describe Jesus' death as the perfect realisation of the table community movement. If the table community movement was finally realised by Jesus' death, no more "movement" for the realisation of the table community would be necessary for there could only be the realised table community. If this is so, instead of saying that "the resurrected Christ can be met where the material, daily food is shared and eaten",[144] we should say that as we share the material, daily food with one another, we meet the resurrected Jesus all the time for we enjoy the perfect table community that is already realised through the death of Jesus.

In the story of Jesus' last supper, minjung theologians illuminate only the aspect of Jesus' sharing of his body and blood to support the basic premise of minjung theology that Jesus' table community movement was the sharing movement. But, in the case of Jesus' giving his body and blood for the many, it is difficult to characterise it as an act of sharing. It is more appropriate to perceive Jesus' giving his body and blood as an act of offering his life in a vicarious way. Jesus did not *share* his body and blood with other people, but *offered* them as a sacrifice to atone for the sins of the world.

Jesus' Other Table Fellowship

Minjung theologians point out that other meal accounts should be interpreted in the light of Jesus' table fellowship with tax-collectors and sinners, i.e., the so-called minjung. It is not quite clear what they mean by that and they simply ignore other meal accounts. However, we need to illuminate other instances in which Jesus had table fellowship with all sorts of people.[145] First, Jesus' disciples must have been the most important partners of his table fellowship for he must have had meals every day with his disciples throughout his ministry.[146] Jesus and his disciples had the Sabbath meal in the house of Simon (Mk 1.29-31). Jesus had the last supper, i.e., the last Passover meal with his disciples (Mk 14.17-26 *pars*). According to Luke's report, Jesus says "I

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[143] *Ibid.*

[144] *Ibid.*

[145] Dong-Sun Kim, *The Bread for Today and the Bread for Tomorrow*, p. 75.

have eagerly desired to eat this Passover *with you* before I suffer" (Lk 22.15. italics mine). Here, on the eve of his death Jesus shares the Passover meal only with his disciples. Even after his resurrection, Jesus appeared to two of his disciples who were going to Emmaus and had a table fellowship with them (Lk 24.30). Secondly, according to Luke, Jesus had table fellowship three times with Jewish religious leaders (Lk 7.36; 11.37; 14.1). In Lk 7.36-50, Jesus was invited to share the meal with a group of Pharisees (7.49). While Jesus was eating the meal, a woman in the city who was a sinner came into the house with an alabaster jar of ointment and anointed Jesus' feet with its content (v. 38). In this story, the *sinner* appears as an intruder upon Jesus' table fellowship with a group of Pharisees not as the partner of Jesus' table fellowship. Although it is true that Jesus was accused sinners by the Pharisees and the scribes of having table fellowship with (cf. Lk 15.2), it is equally true that Jesus did not exclude the Jewish religious leaders from his table fellowship. Thirdly, Jesus and his disciples were entertained by rich people (cf. Mk 14.3 *par*) and by the anonymous "owner of the house" (Mk 14.12-16).

I.4 Summary

One of the characteristics of Jesus' mission was his table fellowship with various groups of people. The reign of God is closely connected with Jesus' table fellowship. In this respect, it is correct to observe that Jesus' earthly mission can be characterised as an 'eating-together' movement. Minjung theologians argue that Jesus' 'eating-together' movement represents his minjung movement because by sharing meal with minjung at that time Jesus broke the social barriers. We may summarise our reflection on the biblical passages as follows:

a) It seems correct to observe the Jesus' movement as the table community movement and Jesus' table fellowship as reflecting the reality of the kingdom of God in a proleptic manner. However, it is difficult to characterise Jesus' table community movement as minjung movement. Minjung theologians argue that Jesus' table fellowship with tax-collectors and sinners, the so-called minjung, is the pivotal meal event among the various meal events. But, as we have examined, the Gospel writers

[146] Cf. G. Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology* (London: Epworth Press, 1971), p. 28.

report that Jesus had table fellowship with all sorts of people within the Jewish community. It then is more appropriate to say that the Jewish religious leaders whom Jesus did not exclude from his table fellowship criticised Jesus for eating with sinners not because of the exclusiveness or frequency of Jesus' having table fellowship with them, but because of the scandalous nature of his having a meal together with them.

b) Although Jesus' eating with tax-collectors and sinners was certainly a revolutionary act in that it ignored the existing social order, it does not demonstrate that Jesus' table community movement was a minjung movement. The scandalous nature of Jesus' table community movement comes from the fact that Jesus broke the social barriers set by Judaism concerning the dietary practice. Jesus' meal-sharing with tax-collectors must have been more provocative to minjung than to the religious leaders, for tax-collectors were the 'enemy of poor minjung' in that they exploited minjung through taxation. If Jesus' table fellowship was an act of reconciliation, the message of reconciliation was directed both to the Jewish leaders and to minjung for, as Dong-Sun Kim observes, "no one was excluded from becoming the family of his community".[147] In this regard, we may say that Jesus' table community movement aimed at the creation of a new order in contrast to the existing society. In order to establish an alternative society, Jesus not only gathered the socially weak and marginalised into his table community but also, by sharing meals with the Jewish leaders, showed concern for the Jewish leaders and called them to his table community.

c) Drawing on these observations, we may conclude that Jesus' table community movement represents Jesus' *mokmin* practice in that it embraced all sorts of people from different social classes, thus embodying the egalitarian principles of the Kingdom of God that accept even *sinners* in the midst of the fellowship. By practising the *mokmin* spirit, Jesus was actually inviting the Jewish leaders to participate in the table community movement and to break the social barriers. If the act of eating together presupposes not only fellowship but also the equality of the diners, Jesus, by eating together with people from different classes, was demonstrating that all the people, regardless of their social status, were equal in Jesus community. In this regard, Jesus'

table community movement is an embodiment of the *mokmin* spirit and a challenge to the whole society, particularly to the ruling class and to the non-minjung people.

II. Jesus' Solidarity with the Poor *Min*

Jesus' solidarity with the poor and oppressed is demonstrated in his healing activity. The Gospel writers report that Jesus described his ministry in terms of healing ministry as well as teaching ministry. Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness (Mt 9. 35). When Jesus sent out his disciples, he gave them instructions to proclaim the good news of the coming Kingdom of God and to cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers and cast out the demons (Mt 10.7-8). In response to John's inquiry of Jesus' identity, Jesus described what he did: "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news preached to them" (Mt 11.5). Thus, we need to examine the significance of Jesus' healing.

II.1 Healing the Demon-Possessed: Liberation from Satanic Oppression

Jesus' exorcism is closely related to the coming of God's kingdom and it was the proof and vindication of Jesus' announcement of the coming of the Kingdom of God. The arrival of the kingdom is proclaimed as a simultaneous phenomenon with the destruction of demons.[148] If the arrival of God's kingdom takes place simultaneously with the destruction of satanic rule and if we are given the concrete examples of Jesus' exorcistic activity, we then may ask about the nature of satanic rule under which the demoniacs were subjugated. The Gospel writers report Jesus' exorcism in several cases: i) the demoniac in the synagogue (Mk 1.21-28/ Lk 4.31-37); ii) the Gerasene demoniac (Mk 5.1-20/ Mt 8.28-9.1/ Lk 8.26-39); iii) the Syrophoenician woman's daughter (Mk 7.24-30/ Mt 15.21-28); and iv) the epileptic boy (Mk 9.14-29/ Mt 17.14-21/ Lk 9.37-43a). It then is necessary to examine the stories to identify the nature of satanic rule and the way Jesus demonstrated the coming of the Kingdom of God.

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[147] Dong-Sun Kim, *ibid.*, p. 95.

[148] Kallas, *The Significance of the Synoptic Miracles*, p. 78.

The Demoniac in the Synagogue (Mk 1.21-28/ Lk 4.31-37). Jesus went into a synagogue in Capernaum and taught people there. There happened to be a man with an unclean spirit who cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God" (Lk 4.34/ Mk 1.24). Jesus rebuked him saying, "Be silent and come out of him" (Mk 1.25). And the unclean spirit came out of him, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice. We find here that the partner of Jesus in the dialogue is not the person who was possessed by the unclean spirit but the unclean spirit itself. The man had to remain silent, no more in control of his life. He lost his sense of speech. The unclean spirit controlled the man as it pleased even up to at the last moment before it left the man's body. The man was deprived of the right to live his own life.

The Gerasene Demoniac (Mk 5.1-20/ Mt 8.28-29/ Lk 8.26-29). A man with an unclean spirit appeared from among the tombs to meet Jesus who just stepped out of the boat. The man showed such superhuman strength that no one could control him and was self-destroying. He lived among the tombs and in the mountains. When he saw Jesus, he came to Jesus and bowed down before him shouting at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me" (Mk 5.7). It seem ironic to observe that the demon is demanding Jesus not to torment him for it is actually the demon that torments the man. It is a distortion of reality. The tormentor pleas Jesus not to torment him. We observe two things here that manifest satanic oppression. First, the man lost his voice. Again, it is the demon who appears as the partner in the dialogue with Jesus. After Jesus cast out the demons, the man proclaimed in the Decapolis what Jesus had done for him. Not only was the man liberated from the power of the demons but he began to proclaim with his own restored voice about Jesus. Secondly, the man was alienated from his home and from his friends. The man wanted to be with Jesus after he recovered his sanity but Jesus did not allow that and sent him back to the group he once belonged to.

The Lunatic Boy (Mk 9.14-29/ Mt 17.14-21/ Lk 9.37-43a). A man brought his son with an unclean spirit to Jesus. He had a spirit that made him unable to speak and hear. Thus, Jesus commands: "You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you to come out and never enter him again" (Mk 9.25). The boy was deprived of the ability to speak with his own mouth and hear what others say.

We may sum up by saying that when demons possess men, they show a common feature: the loss of their own voices. They are deprived of the means to express their thought and emotion. By casting out the demons, Jesus liberated the demoniacs from their bondage of the demons which is characterised as the suppression of language.

II.2. Healing the Blind: Social De-stigmatisation

The Gospel writers report that Jesus healed the blind in several cases: the two blind men at Capernaum (Mt 9.27-31); the blind man of Bethsaida (Mk 8.22-26); the blind beggar Bartimaeus (Mk 10.46-52/ Mt 20.29-34/ Lk 18.35-43); and a man born blind (Jn 9.1-41). Although the blind were generally marginalised and oppressed from the society, it is in the case of healing the man born blind that the social significance of Jesus' healing the blind is clearly disclosed.

Jesus' Perspective. Jn 9.1 reports that, as he was walking along, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. Judging from the dialogue between Jesus and his disciples and his subsequent act of healing, it was intentional that Jesus stopped at the place where the blind beggar was sitting (v. 8). The disciples' question[149] and Jesus' healing activity[150] show that they were talking in front of the blind beggar. Here, the blind beggar keeps silent. He does not cry out for help. It is probable that the disciples' question might have silenced the blind beggar who was within earshot. The blind beggar is a silent figure on this scene. Jesus takes the initiative in healing him.

The question that Jesus' disciples asked is significant in that it reflects the public sentiment concerning blindness: "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" By expressing the oppressive sentiment of the general public about the blind people, Jesus' disciples showed that they were deeply immersed in the religious teaching of Jewish society. This question shows no compassion for the blind man. They

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[149] In v. 2, the disciples asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, *this* man or his parents, that he was born blind?" The use of the pronoun "this" suggests that they were quite close to the blind beggar.

[150] In v. 6, right after his saying given in response to the disciples' question and without any indication of physical movement towards the blind beggar, Jesus spat on the ground, made mud with his saliva and spread it on the man's eyes.

represent the teaching of the Pharisees who labelled the blind man as being born entirely in sin (v. 34).

Jesus did not accept the conventional way of labelling certain groups of people as sinners. Jesus replied, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him" (v. 3). It is wrong to interpret this remark of Jesus as endorsing the principle of labelling people as sinners.[151]

Restoring the Outcast

The blind beggar's silence in vv. 1-9 is contrasted with his eloquent testimony to the unknown healer in vv. 10-34. The blind beggar was so adamant in expressing his belief in public that the Pharisees rebuked him not to try to teach them. The Pharisees refused to accept the man into their fellowship even after he was healed but instead, drove him out. Jesus came to the person and revealed his identity to him.

II.3. Healing the Paralytic at Bethesda (Jn 5.2-47): Release of *Han*[152]

When Jesus went up to Jerusalem to participate in the festival of the Jews, he went to the Sheep Gate. There were many invalids—the blind, the lame and the paralysed. There was a man who had been ill for thirty eight years. Jesus came to him and asked if he wanted to be made well. The man did not answer directly Jesus' question. He rather stated his situation: "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me" (v. 7). He might have thought that it was futile to respond to Jesus' question. It does not need to be asked whether he wants to be healed or not for his staying near the pool eloquently expresses his desire to be healed. The sick man's reply simply describes his desperate situation. When he makes his way to the pool, what could he think of except being cured? In every sentence he uttered we find the *han* of a sick man: the complete helplessness, the desperate attempt to make his way to the pool and the great

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[151] *Contra* Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 342.

[152] *Han* is a Korean word that expresses the accumulated grief. According to Young Hak Hyun, "*han* is a sense of unresolved resentment against injustices suffered, a sense of selflessness because of the overwhelming odds against, a feeling of the total abandonedness, a feeling of acute pain in one's guts and bowls making the whole body writhe and wriggle, and an obstinate urge to take revenge and to right the wrong – all these combined." Cf. Young Hak Hyun, "Minjung Theology and the Religion of Han," *EAJT* 3:2 (1985), p. 354.

disappointment to find someone already in the pool ahead of him. This response of the sick man is *han*-ridden. Immediately after the man's response, Jesus announced to the man, "Stand up, take up your mat and walk" (v. 8).

II.4. Healing the Lepers: Touching the Untouchables

When Jesus described the mission of his disciples, he included the cleansing of the lepers (Mt 10.8). In his answer to the inquirers sent by John, Jesus included the healing of lepers as a sign confirming his identity (Mt 11.5; Lk 7.22). In the Synoptics, two cases of healing lepers are recorded: ten lepers (Lk 17.11-19) and a leper (Mk 1.41-45/ Mt 8.1-4/ Lk 5.12-16). Here, we will examine the story of healing of the leper as reported in Mk 1.41-45 *pars*.

A Leper came to Jesus: Breaking the Rule

A leper came forward to Jesus. He dared to come forward to meet Jesus in public. He knelt down before Jesus (Mt 8.2; Mk 1.40; Lk 5.12). According to Matthew, the leper stopped before Jesus while a large crowd were following him. Jesus and the whole crowd were stopped by the leper. Not only did the leper come out into the public, he also stopped the large crowd of people. The radical nature of the leper's action will become obvious when we understand the place of the leper in Jewish society.

Although lepers were not severely discriminated or isolated in many other nations in the ancient world,[153] in Jewish society they were absolutely segregated from mainstream society. The lepers were treated as if they were dead. The lepers were excluded not only from the Israelite community but also barred even from their own homes.[154] Once a person is diagnosed by the priest as having leprosy, he was banished from human society (Lev 13.46).[155] The exclusion of the lepers from society was justified on religious grounds. The whole society took it for granted that the exclusion of lepers from society is necessary to preserve the purity of the community. Leprosy

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[153] Cf. William Barclay, *And He Had Compassion* (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1975), p. 32; Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 3, 11, 4, records that among the lepers in many nations there were who lived in honour, not alienated from their society, but held offices in the commonwealth, and were not barred from the privilege of entering into holy places and temples.

[154] C.H. Cave, "The Leper: Mark 1.41-45," *NTS* 25 (1975), p. 249.

[155] Barclay, *And He Had Compassion,* p. 34.

was regarded first of all as an impurity *par excellence* which accordingly must be excluded from Israel (Lev 17-26; Deut 21-26).[156] In some Old Testament texts (Num 12.10; 2 Kgs 15.5; 2 Chr 26.16. cf. Lev 14.22ff.) and in rabbinic theology, leprosy was conceived as a divine punishment for sins. Thus, the leper in Jewish society was a serious sinner to be avoided.

The lepers had to live under severe restrictions. They were prohibited to come near the places where normal members of society were living. The leper on this scene violated this social and religious regulation by coming forward in public place. His coming to Jesus in public discloses a significant character of Jesus' ministry. Our question is: *What encouraged him to take this provocative action?* This act of the leper cannot be interpreted as his resistance against the religious practice of Jewish society. The cause of the sick man's provocative action must be deeply related to his perception of Jesus. Barclay observes that it is astonishing that the leper came up to Jesus at all and it reveals the leper's perception of Jesus.[157] The leper would never have approached Jesus if he had regarded Jesus as an ordinary rabbi, for he knew that he would have been treated with disgust. The leper obviously saw in Jesus something he had never seen in any religious teacher before. Few stories tell us more eloquently about what Jesus was like than this one does. It tells us that Jesus was approachable and does not turn down even people of the lowest class in society.[158] The leper must have had a strong belief in Jesus' power to heal and also in Jesus' compassion. The former is expressed in his plea, "If you will, you can make me clean" (v. 40b). Although in Matthew and Luke the leper addresses Jesus using the word 'Lord', it is difficult to find any Christological significance here.[159] The expression 'if you will' cannot be interpreted as indicating the leper's doubt about Jesus' willingness to heal for it is hard to imagine the leper, who dared to expose himself in public to meet Jesus, could have expressed doubt in his plea to Jesus. Although he had confidence in Jesus' power to heal, he would not have dared to come to Jesus if he had the slightest doubt

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[156] Michal Wojciechowski, "The touching of the leper (Mark 1.40-45) as a historical and symbolic act of Jesus," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 33 (1989), p. 118.

[157] Barclay, *And He Had Compassion*, p. 35.

[158] *Ibid.*

[159] Cf. Hendrik van der Loos, *The Miracles of Jesus* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. 483.

about Jesus' compassionate nature. The leper's desperate condition and his confidence in Jesus' power and compassion must have combined to provoke his daring behaviour.

Touching the Untouchable: Another Breaking the Rule

Instead of barring the leper from public, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched the leper. There are some scholars who maintain that *orgistheis* (be angry), not *splagchnistheis* (have compassion), was originally used in Mk 1.41.[160] However, it will be more appropriate to see that Jesus healed the leper in response to the leper's confidence in the compassionate Jesus. The physical gestures of stretching out his hand and touching the leper can be explained properly seen only in terms of Jesus' compassion on the leper. If we take the authenticity of *orgistheis*, it is not easy to explain the reason why and about what Jesus became angry for there is no clue given in the immediate context.

Jesus' touching of the leper is as much provocative as the appearance of the leper in public. Barclay's pictorial description on how much contact with a leper was avoided in Jewish society is worth quoting in full:

> Contact with a leper defiled the person who had that contact. The law enumerated sixty-one different contacts which brought defilement, and the defilement which contact with a leper brought was second only to the defilement caused by contact with a dead body. If a leper so much as put his head inside a house everything in it became unclean, even to the beams of the roof. It was forbidden to greet a leper even in an open place. No one might stand nearer to a leper than four cubits away; and if the wind was blowing from him in the direction of the other person, the leper must stand at least one hundred cubits away. . . No disease isolated a man from his fellow men as leprosy did.[161]

This act of touching the leper i) vindicated the leper's behaviour, and ii) broke the established religious perception of the leper. Loos asserts that the significance of Jesus' touching must be sought from the religious realm. He observes that in the Old Testament, the idea that the power of God is personified in his hand does appear repeatedly.[162] Hence, he argues that in understanding Jesus' act of touching the leper it

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[160] Cave, "The Leper: Mark 1.41-45," pp. 245-250; G. Dalman, *The Words of Jesus* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1902), p. 65, sees this as a possible confusion of "he was moved with compassion" with "he was angry".

[161] Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

is proper to relate Jesus' touching to the Old Testament presentation of God's exercise of power: "When considering touching by Jesus, we must think first of all the Old Testament conception of the hand of God which brings salvation, and then of the transfer of power of the prophets by physical contact (1 Kgs 17.21) or by touching with objects belonging to prophets (2 Kgs 4.29)."[163] Wojciechowski also interprets Jesus' touching as an event through which Jesus revealed his divine identity, but he adds his own interpretation that Jesus used the occasion for his self-revelation as the Holy One of God.[164] According to Wojciechowski, by his voluntary act of touching the leper in that religious milieu where the healing of leprosy was attributed only to God himself (Exod 4.6; Num 12.10-14; 2 Kgs 5), Jesus manifested the self-consciousness of his special holiness and power in the sacral sphere.[165] It seems without question that Jesus disclosed his self-consciousness as the Holy One of God in his act of touching of the leper. However, this theological understanding of Jesus' act of touching the leper cannot exhaust the meaning of this shocking act. Wojciechowski himself describes Jesus' act of touching the leper as an absolutely shocking and incomparable act.[166]

II.5. Healing a Haemorrhaging Woman: Back to Visible Life (Mk 5.21-43 *par.*)

While Jesus was going to Jairus' house, he encountered a woman who suffered from hemorrhages for twelve years. The woman seems to have led a normal life before she suffered from haemorrhages, for the story suggests that she had some possessions which she had spent for her treatment.[167] After twelve years of suffering and having exhausted her resources, she became impoverished and her suffering grew worse (v.

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[162] Loos, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

[163] *Ibid.*, p. 316.

[164] Wojciechowski, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

[165] *Ibid.*

[166] *Ibid.*, p. 118

[167] Kinukawa, *Women and Jesus in Mark*, p. 38, explains that the woman's goal was not the curing of disease but the recovery of her 'wholeness and holiness' and the acceptance by her community as their legitimate member. Though Kinukawa holds that the cure of disease was involved, we cannot distinguish between the cure of her disease and acceptance of her by the community as their legitimate member. When she was not suffering from haemorrhages twelve years before, she must have been a legitimate member of her community with some property. As all the personal predicament was caused

26). At a time of complete hopelessness, she heard about Jesus and summoned up enough courage to meet him.

Accessibility of Jesus

She finally came to Jesus and touched his cloak for she said, "If I touch his clothes, I will be made well" (v. 28). This saying reveals not only the intensity of the woman's desire but also her perception of Jesus. We should note that it was after she had heard "*ta peri tou Iesou* (the things concerning Jesus)" that she came to have such a confidence in the possibility of her cure. The things that the woman heard concerning Jesus were news about his healing ministry.[168] But, we may guess that she heard not only about Jesus' healing ministry but his compassionate attitude toward the poor and the downcast.[169] It is probable that she became confident after hearing that Jesus had accepted even those who were marginalised and outcast from the society as "sinners".

The Woman's Invisibility

In the story, the woman's act of touching is contrasted with the repeated pleas of Jairus in public. While Jairus was pleading with Jesus to lay hands on his daughter, the haemorrhaging woman decided to remain invisible for she did not dare to come forward in public to ask for healing. Even though she was confident in Jesus' healing power and his compassion, she had approached Jesus secretly because "the malady rendered her ceremonially unclean and would convey uncleanness to all who came in contact with her."[170]

Back to Visible Life

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by the disease, she was seeking the cure of the disease for the past twelve years, for, if she is cured, she would participate in community life again.

[168] Taylor, *The Gospel according to St Mark*, p. 290.

[169] In this sense, Jeremias is right in explaining that the woman's confidence in Jesus' kindness was so great that she was certain that the silent gesture would be enough. See Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, p. 163.

[170] Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 290. If she decided to remain invisible, it is then difficult to argue that she "consciously defies the established system of holiness" by violating the "patriarchal social taboo." *Contra* Kinukawa, *Women and Jesus in Mark*, pp. 41-42.

When the woman touched Jesus' cloak, she was cured immediately and the bleeding stopped. She felt in her body that she was cured. The Greek verb *hiaomai* conveys the idea of physical restoration. At that very moment, Jesus immediately knew that power had gone forth from him and turned about to the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" (v. 30). Jesus could have let the woman disappear secretly as she approached him without being noticed, but he made her expose herself in public. Jesus directed the crowd's attention to the anonymous person who was healed by touching his garment. She came in fear and trembling for she defiled Jesus by touching him. Instead of rebuking her, Jesus said "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease" (v. 34).[171] It was unusual for Jesus, a religious leader, to talk to a woman in public. Moreover, by calling her "daughter" and praising her faith in public, Jesus announced to the crowd that she should be brought back to 'visible life' again and live in peace as a legitimate member of the community.

[171] Cf. Jeremy Moiser, "'She Was Twelve Years Old' (Mk 5.42): A Note on Jewish-Gentile Controversy in Mark's Gospel," *Irish Biblical Studies* 3 (1981), p. 183.

Chapter Five. Jesus and *Mokmin* Spirit (II): Awakening the Social Responsibility in Jesus Community

Introduction

The disciples were the constant companion of Jesus during his earthly ministry. According to Mark, Jesus "appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, *to be with him*" (Mk 3.13-14). So, wherever Jesus went, we find Jesus' disciples with him. The close relationship between Jesus and his disciples is well described by P. T. Chandapilla:

> All [Jesus'] experiences in life such as eating, drinking, sleeping, working, talking, travelling and every other phase of personal life were in the presence of the Twelve. They were along with Him in all this. He did not have a personally private life of His own except His communion with the Father. Even in this experience the disciples had access.[1]

In this regard, we may argue that it is much more significant to illuminate the role of the disciples in the Jesus community than to describe the social character of *ochlos*. In this chapter, we will examine the place of the disciples and their role in the transmission of Jesus' *mokmin* spirit.

I. Situating Jesus' Disciples

I.1. Recipient of Jesus' Teaching

Jesus was a teacher of the people.[2] Jesus never met the crowd without teaching them, so it became his custom to teach the people (Mk 10.1).[3] Jesus took every opportunity

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[1] P. T. Chandapilla, *The Master Trainer* (Bombay: Gospel Literature Service, 1974), p. 18.

[2] It needs to be pointed out that minjung theologians seem to ignore the image of Jesus prominently presented in the Gospel of Mark as a teacher. See R. P. Meye, *Jesus and the Twelve: Discipleship and Revelation in Mark's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), pp. 30-60. Cf. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, p. 55. Mark refers to Jesus' teaching five times, to Jesus as teacher twelve times. In the Gospel of Mark, the title "teacher" refers exclusively to Jesus, and the expression "to teach" is used fifteen times, out of the seventeen times used by Mark, in relation to Jesus.

[3] Concerning the authority of Jesus as a teacher, N. Suh makes a remark that seems to contradict his own argument for Jesus' minjung status. Comparing Jesus' authority with that of the scribes, Suh argues that: "The authority of the lawyers was based upon the fact that they spoke according to the law; and the authority of the prophets was based upon the fact that they spoke the word of God. But Jesus did not draw the basis of his authority either from the law or from God. He spoke his own word. In this sense, he was the *true God* and the true man." N. Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," p. 160. Suh admits that the authority of Jesus as a teacher is the authority of the true God.

to teach regardless of the place insofar as people gathered around him. He taught in the synagogues (Mk 1.21;6.2), in the Jerusalem temple (Mk 12.35), in the open field (Mk 6.34) and by the seashore (Mk 2.13; 4.1). In all four Gospels, Jesus' contemporaries addressed Jesus '*didaskalos*' (teacher).[4] Jesus was primarily looked up to as a teacher by all categories of people.[5]

Although teaching and healing were the primary aspects of Jesus' public ministry,[6] he attached particular importance to his private ministry of training his twelve disciples.[7] A. B. Bruce observes this aspect of Jesus' ministry:

How can Jesus, who is a true God, be perceived as a mere minjung? Although we may accept the argument that the title "teacher" was used only to address Jesus in a respectful manner, without carrying any particular significance, minjung theologians will have to explain why people of all classes addressed a mere minjung who lacked formal education as a "teacher"? Given these data, we may conclude that Jesus' contemporary people did not regard Jesus as a minjung but as a Teacher.

[4] Rainer Riesner, "Jesus as Preacher and Teacher," in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition*, ed. by Henry Wansbrough (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), p. 186, notes that the vocative is the translation of *rabbi* in Hebrew/Aramaic, which in the time of Jesus was not a fixed title for an academically trained and ordained scribe. The use of the title in addressing Jesus in the Gospels confirms this observation, for Jesus was perceived by people of his hometown as someone without formal academic training.

[5] The general public as well as the Jewish religious leaders perceived Jesus as a teacher. The rich man came to Jesus and called him "Good Teacher" (Mk 10.17). The person who came to report the death of Jairus' daughter while Jesus was talking with the haemorrhaging woman on his way to Jairus house addressed Jesus as 'Teacher': "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" (Mk 5.35). The blind beggar Bartimaeus called Jesus 'Rabboni' (Mk 10.51). Jesus' own disciples addressed him as "Teacher". When James and John approached Jesus to request positions of honour in the kingdom of God, they called Jesus "Teacher" (Mk 10.35). Jesus acknowledged the use of "Teacher", along with the title "Lord", by his disciples in addressing Jesus, and affirmed his status as teacher: "You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am" (Jn 13.13).

Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity*, p. 118, denies that Jesus ever claimed any of the exalted titles, for he holds that Jesus not only taught his disciples not to claim any form of authority over the people but he himself practised that. Nolan supports his argument by referring to two episodes: Jesus' encounter with a rich young ruler and Jesus' footwashing. The rich young ruler addressed Jesus "Good Teacher", and Jesus responded by saying, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone" (Mk 10.18/ Lk 18.19). Nolan interprets that this saying of Jesus was to discourage people from addressing him as "rabbi" or "Master". However, we need to point out that what Jesus discouraged was the use of the term "good", not the use of the title "rabbi" or "Teacher." Nolan states concerning Jesus' footwashing that "they wanted to call him Master but he wanted to be their servant, the one who washes their feet." This interpretation is also incorrect, for, though it is true that Jesus subverts the normal practice of the society by taking the role of a servant, Jesus rather endorses the way they addressed him as either "Lord" or "Teacher."

[6] Vernon K. Robins, *Jesus the Teacher* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), p. 114, holds that both exorcism and healings were part of Jesus' role as a teacher.

[7] *Contra* Ernest Best, *Disciples and Discipleship: studies in the Gospel according to Mark* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986), p. 159, who do not see any special relationship between Jesus and the twelve disciples.

> Both from His words and from His actions we can see that [Jesus] attached supreme importance to that part of His work which consisted in training the twelve. In the intercessory prayer (John 17.6), e.g. He speaks of the training He had given these men as if it had been the principal part of His own earthly ministry. And such, in one sense, it really was. The careful painstaking education of the disciples secured that the Teacher's influence on the world should be permanent.[8]

It is not unusual that Jesus directed the major discourses primarily to his disciples.[9] i) Mt 5.1 records that the disciples were the primary audience of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Jesus, seeing the crowds, went up on the mountain and when he sat down his disciples came to him. At this point, Jesus began to teach them. We cannot say that Jesus' Sermon on the Mount was addressed only to his disciples.[10] At the end of the Sermon, Matthew reports the response of the crowds (Mt 7.28), which shows that they were among the major audience of Jesus' teaching. This means that the crowds, along with Jesus' disciples, constituted Jesus' audience from the beginning of his teaching. However, G. Lohfink notes that the reference to the disciples in Mt 5.1 was not made by accident and explains that they constituted the 'inner core of Jesus' audience.'[11] ii) Jesus revealed his death and resurrection exclusively to his disciples (Mk 8.31 *pars.*; Mk 9.30-31 *pars.*; Mk 10.32-34). iii) In Mk 9.30-31, Mark informs that Jesus did not want the people to know where he and his disciples were, for "he was teaching his disciples." iv) Jesus spent the last hours of his earthly ministry with his disciples. Jesus taught the disciples about the signs of the age in private (Mt 24.3-

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[8] A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1894), p. 13.

[9] M. J. Wilkins, "Discipleship," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1992), p. 182.

[10] Warren Carter, "The Crowds in Matthew's Gospel," *CBQ* 55 (1993), p. 58, argues that the crowds are not only differentiated from the disciples but also distanced from Jesus, based on his observation of the consecutive shifts of focus in v. 1. He holds that the focus on the crowds given in v. 1a is shifted in v. 1b to Jesus who goes up the mountain alone. The focus then again shifts to Jesus' disciples in v. 1c who come to Jesus (v. 1d). Jesus teaches them in v. 2. Although his point that the disciples form a separate group from the crowds may be valid, the alleged shifts of focus in v. 1 seem to be arbitrary. V. 1 simply describes the physical movement of Jesus to find a suitable place to teach.

We cannot identify the audience of Jesus' teaching only with his disciples. The fact that Jesus saw the crowds before he moved to a place up the mountain to teach seems to indicate that Jesus had the crowds in mind as his audience. The use of the singular verb *anebe* to describe Jesus' going up the mountain cannot be interpreted as Jesus' distancing himself from the crowds, for the singular verb also implies Jesus' going alone without his own disciples. *Contra* Carter, *ibid.*

[11] Lohfink, *Jesus and Community*, p. 35.

25.46). He had the Last Supper with his disciples (Mk 14.12-21 *pars*), during which he instituted the Lord's Supper (Mk 14.22-26 *pars*).[12]

I.2. Leaders of Jesus Community

Jesus chose twelve from a larger circle of his followers. As Jesus could have selected more than twelve or less than twelve from the large number of eligible men, his choice of twelve disciples is interpreted to be a deliberate one. Lohfink maintains that the number "twelve" carries a symbolic meaning and the institution of the twelve is 'a symbolic prophetic action' in that it evokes the hope of Israel to restore the twelve tribes of Israel (Ezek 37; 39.23-29, 40-48).[13] By selecting the twelve disciples Jesus demonstrated that he was inaugurating the gathering of Israel in the eschatological salvific community.[14] A. B. Bruce refers to Mt 19.28 in support of this interpretation.[15] In Mt 19.28, Jesus describes to his disciples the rewards awaiting them in the kingdom for their services and sacrifices: "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Here, two things are made clear: first, Jesus' Messianic kingship of Israel and secondly, the leadership of the disciples in the royal house of David.

Not only did Jesus demonstrate his purpose in gathering the eschatological salvific community by selecting the twelve disciples to be his constant companions, he gave them both the mission to gather Israel in the community and the authority to achieve

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[12] Robins, *Jesus the Teacher*, p. 125, analyses the Gospel of Mark in terms of Jesus' pedagogical design in relation to his disciples. According to Robins, the Gospel of Mark is divided into four sections in accordance with the development of the relationship between Jesus the teacher and his disciples: "The first stage (3.7-5.43) features Jesus introducing basic details of the system of understanding that underlies his speech and action. The second stage (6.1-8.26) shows the disciples-companions able to perform most of the activities characteristic of Jesus' ministry but unable to integrate the system of the gospel and the kingdom of God. . . The third stage (8.27-10.45) portrays full-scale interaction between Jesus and his disciple-companions over central dimensions of the system of thought and action manifested by Jesus and required for discipleship. The fourth stage (10.46-12.44) presents Jesus and his disciple-companions experiencing the ramifications of Jesus' system of thought and action in the public setting where the dominant ethico-religious group has religious and political control.

[13] Lohfink, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10. Also Jurgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ* (London: SCM Press, 1990), p. 147; Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 32.

[14] Lohfink, *ibid.*, p. 10.

that mission.[16] Thus we may say that the Gospel writers present the disciples as leaders within the new community to come.[17]

II. *Mokmin* as the Social Responsibility in Jesus Community

The central message of Jesus to his disciples, who were selected both to transmit the spirit of Jesus and to become representatives of Jesus in the eschatological community of Israel, was to embody the *mokmin* spirit, i.e., to build the statusless society and to help the poor.

II. 1. Creation of a New Social Order

Jesus taught his disciples that the eschatological community of Israel must be a statusless society. So, Jesus taught his disciples to embody the *mokmin* spirit by subverting the existing status system of the Jewish society and to create a new social order, i.e., a statusless society. We find that Jesus' washing the feet of his disciples (Jn 13.12-17) and his instruction concerning the leadership of the disciples (Mk 10.41-45 *pars*) represent Jesus' teaching about the nature of the new society.

Jesus Washing the Disciples' Feet (Jn 13.12-17)

a) *The Unthinkable Act.* Jesus performed this act of foot-washing as an example to his disciples to have the same praxis: "So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (vv. 13-14). There are various views on whether the meaning of footwashing in vv. 1-11 is compatible with the meaning of footwashing in vv. 12-20.[18] Boismard holds that this pericope constitutes of sacramental (vv. 3, 4-

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[15] Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

[16] Lohfink, *ibid*, p. 10, says that the mission of the twelve disciples is to gather the people into the eschatological community of salvation inaugurated by Jesus. In other words, the creation of the eschatological Israel is to be achieved through the institution of the twelve disciples and their proclamation of God's reign.

[17] Cf. Wilkins, "Disciples," p. 178;

[18] For a detailed description of the debates on the structure, see Francis J. Moloney, *The Johannine Son of Man* (Las-Roma, 1978), pp. 186-194;

11) and moralising accounts (vv. 1, 12-15, 17, 18-19).[19] First of all, we will have to examine whether Jesus' teaching in vv. 1-11 is harmonised with the teaching in vv. 12-20 before we discuss the implication of Jesus' footwashing.

J.H. Bernard asserts that what Jesus intended to teach through this episode is the moral aspect found in vv. 12-20.[20] Wilfred L. Knox equates the disciples' cleanness with their baptismal purity and washing their feet with the divine forgiveness of the inevitable sins of daily life. Their footwashing, i.e., seeking to obtain the forgiveness of their minor sins by confession and prayer, is required when they come to the Eucharist.[21] Boismard holds that the soteriological-Christological significance of vv. 1-11 is not harmonised with the moral teaching in vv. 12-20.[22] Rejecting all these interpretations, James D. G. Dunn presented his own understanding. By arguing that the two parts are linked in that the footwashing symbolises the spiritual cleansing effected by Jesus' death on the cross, he weakened the moral teaching of the footwashing.[23]

If we read the passage carefully, however, we may obtain a different interpretation of vv. 1-11. In v. 10, Jesus says: "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is entirely *clean*; And you are *clean*, though not all of you." Here, Jesus explicates the spiritual condition of his disciples by employing the image of bathing. The disciples do not need to wash the whole body because they have already bathed and became clean. As Bultmann correctly observes, the concept of cleanness is connected with and clarified in Jn 15.3 where Jesus' disciples are said to be made clean by the word Jesus spoke to them.[24] They are made clean not by their association with Jesus, as Wilfred L. Knox holds, but by the teachings of Jesus, which means that they are taught all that they have to learn. *But still they need to wash their feet.* Here the need for footwashing indicates the need for *praxis*. In addition to what they have been

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[19] Boismard, "Le Lavement des Pieds - Jn 13.1-17," *RB* 71 (1964), pp. 5-24.

[20] J.H. Bernard, *The Gospel according to St. John* (New York: Scribner's, 1929), pp. 462ff.

[21] Wilfred L. Knox, "John 13.1-30," *HTR* 43 (1950), 161-163.

[22] Boismard, "Le Lavement des Pieds - Jn 13.1-17," p. 24.

[23] J.D.G. Dunn, "The Washing of the Disciples' Feet in John 13.1-20," *ZNW* 61 (1970), pp. 247-252.

[24] Cf. W.K. Grossouw, "A Note on John 13.1-3," *NT* 8 (1966), pp. 124-131.

taught verbally by Jesus, they still need to wash their feet, i.e., to have *praxis*. We may interpret Jesus' seemingly harsh saying to Peter in v. 8 (If I do not wash you, you have no part in me.) as meaning that without *praxis* Peter cannot be part of Jesus community. This interpretation is supported by Jn 15.1-11. Jesus' disciples are made clean by the words of Jesus. However, they are still commanded to bear fruit without which they will be cut off from the vine which clearly symbolises the Jesus community of the new eschatological people of God. Although being made clean, the disciples need to have their feet washed in the sense that they need *praxis*. So, we may say that the same Jesus' teaching to Peter (vv. 6-11) is repeated in the second part of the pericope: they need the *praxis* of footwashing.

The setting for this event is the Passover meal. During supper, Jesus began to wash the feet of his disciples. V. 4 describes in detail how Jesus takes the form of a servant to perform the washing: "Jesus. . . took off his outer robe and tied a towel around himself." Jesus prepares himself for the task of footwashing by adopting the dress of a menial slave which was looked down upon in both Jewish and Gentile circles.[25] Peter became extremely embarrassed at Jesus' act, which reflects the fact that Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet deviates the normal practices of Jewish society. This act of Jesus' footwashing is unthinkable in the *Sitz im Leben Jesu*. Washing another's feet is normally a job for the lowliest of menial servants. Even Jewish slaves are not required to wash their master's feet, a task which is reserved for slaves of other nationalities,[26] and even peers do not wash one another's feet except rarely as a mark of great love.[27] Nowhere in Jewish or Greco-Roman sources is found an instance of a rabbi washing the feet of his disciples.[28]

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[25] Carson, *op. cit*, p. 463.

[26] Cf. C. K. Barrett, *The Gaspel according to St. John: an introduction with commentary and notes on the Greek text* (London: SPCK, 1978), p. 440; Carson, *op. cit.*, p. 462.

[27] Carson, *ibid.*, p. 462: "Wives washed the feet of their husbands, children of their parents, and disciples of their rabbis."

[28] Carson, *ibid.*, p. 462, n. 1. Cf. Erich H. Kiehl, *The Passion of Our Lord* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), p. 57, also notes that Jesus' disciples never heard of a rabbi who washed the feet of his disciples. In this connection, it is noteworthy that John explains in v. 3 that Jesus knew not only his time to return to God but also his divine status and his power given by the Father. This reference to Jesus' status and power reveals that Jesus was not to be compared with any of those traditional Jewish rabbis.

b) *Subversion of Status System.* Why did Jesus perform this unthinkable act on his disciples? Jesus interpreted his act of footwashing as an example for his community and commanded them to practise in the same spirit. The use of "as" in v. 15 includes both comparison and cause, so it is read: "you should also do *as and because* I have done to you." Here, Jesus' intention does not seem to institutionalise the footwashing as an ecclesiastical rite.[29] What Jesus is emphasising here is that in the Jesus community there should never be a status system among people.

The radical character of Jesus' act of footwashing can be disclosed more clearly when the identity of Jesus is remembered. Who was this Jesus washing the feet of disciples? Jesus emphasised that he performed this act of foot-washing as their Teacher and Lord (v. 14). It was Jesus as Teacher and Lord of the disciples who took the form of a slave and intentionally performed the footwashing. Jesus also made it clear that the relationship between Jesus and his disciples is that of master-servant and of the sender-messenger (vv. 16-17). In v. 16, by saying that "servants are not greater than their masters, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them," Jesus reminds his disciples of *who he is* in his relationship with the disciples. By reminding his disciples of his identity after performing this act of footwashing, Jesus underscored the fact that he was well aware of the unprecedented nature of his act, which overturned the accepted social practice. By washing his disciples' feet, Jesus dramatically defied the status system of the Jewish society. There should be no degree of status or rank among people in Jesus community. At that decisive hour, Jesus emphasises that the status system of Jewish society should not be repeated in the Jesus community through his words and especially through his performing the unthinkable act of footwashing.

***Building a Community of Service* (Mk 10.35-45/ Lk 22.24-30)**

a) *Competition among Disciples.* The request for high ranking positions by the sons of Zebedee provoked anger among the disciples. James and John came forward to Jesus and asked him to grant them the most privileged positions after Jesus has came into power. This request reflects their initiative to secure high positions before Jesus is

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[29] *Ibid.*, p. 468.

enthroned as king of Israel.[30] The right and left seats of Jesus in his glory symbolise the status and power of those who sit on them.[31]

b) *Criticism of the Gentile Rulers: Denial of Status-Consciousness.* Jesus summoned his disciples to give a private teaching on the significant matter that would affect the whole of his community. He did not directly rebuke the disciples but referred to the rulers of the Gentiles and their great men. Jesus' reference to the rulers of the Gentiles and their rulers seems to have the effect of telling his disciples that what they compete for mirrors the rulers of the Gentiles and their great men.

By referring to the rulers of the Gentiles and their great men, Jesus actually directs attention to the Kingdom of God.[32] Jesus first observes the practice of the secular government: "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them" (v. 42). He then instructs his disciples that such practices must not characterise the Christian community: "But it shall not be so *among you*" (v. 43a).[33] The secular practice that must not be repeated

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[30] Seeing their request of honoured positions, James and John must have believed that the establishment of the Kingdom of God is near. The Kingdom of God as they understood it is the kingdom that will appear as a historical reality in Israel. The rest of the disciples had the same understanding about the coming Kingdom of God, reflected in the indignant response they showed after hearing the request of James and John.

[31] This request reflects the status system of Jewish society. Even in the feast, the seat that a person takes reflects the guest's honour and status. If he sits close to the host, it shows that he is a guest of honour. If a person is not assigned a seat befits to his status, it becomes a disgrace and dishonour to him.

[32] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 112, interprets the pericope of Mk 10.42-44 as Jesus' criticism of the contemporary political system. According to Ahn, Jesus was contrasting the Kingdom of God with the political system in which humans have power over other humans to oppress and exploit them. He states: "This world is in opposition to the Kingdom of God." *Ibid.* Though Ahn seems to indicate that Jesus here rejects any form of human rule, it is more plausible to take what Jesus say as suggesting an alternative human order.

[33] It seems correct that the phrase "among you" indicates "a larger and more structured community than just the Twelve," but it is wrong to suggest that Jesus addressed the saying to a wider circle of Jesus' followers, not only to the Twelve disciples. *Contra* Quentin Quesnell, "The Women at Luke's Supper," in *Political Issues in Luke-Acts*, p. 64, who argues, based on Jesus' saying in Luke 22.26, that "a comparison of *meizon* and the *neoteros*, the *hegoumenos* and the *diakonon*, seems of out place when addressed to the Twelve alone". Quesnell further states: "If Peter (and John? -- cf. Acts 3 and 4) might be *meizon*, who among the Twelve could reasonably be characterised as 'the younger, the *neophyte*?' And if Peter is the *hegoumenos*, who of the Twelve is 'the one who serves'?" *Ibid.* Quesnell fails to grasp both the context of the saying and Jesus' intention. Jesus said the logion in response to the dispute among his Twelve disciples concerning the greatest (Lk 22.24). Jesus intended

in the Christian community is that of 'lording over and exercising authority'.[34] The two verbs that characterise the practice of the Gentile rulers indicate the abuse of power and oppression.[35] This saying of Jesus seems to assume that even within the community of the disciples there may exist a distinction of rank and authority.[36] Jesus

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to teach his disciples about the nature of true greatness. Jesus was not separating the Twelve disciples between the great and the youngest, and between the leader and the one who serves.

[34] Seeing that Jesus uses the expression "among you" three times in vv. 42-43a, this instruction of Jesus seem to be concerned primarily with the relationship among the disciples and a larger community of Jesus. However, as Mott observes, we will have to suggest that the standard for the Christian community will create a critical awareness in evaluating analogous functions in the political community. See his *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*, p. 195.

[35] *Contra* Mott, *op. cit.*, p. 195-196, holds that these verbs are related with the status system rather than the use of force in exercising the political power. He argues that Jesus here refers to the existence of hierarchy of authority which should not be repeated within the Christian community rather than to the tyranny or the abuse of power. He bases his argument on the observation that the Greek term *katakyrieuein* does not carry the meaning of arrogance or oppression, but simply means to rule over, to be lord over. So he suggest that the rendering of the verb as lord it over is a misinterpretation. p. 195. However, it seems hard to accept this interpretation. The existence of the hierarchical authority is already referred to by the modifying phrase who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles. The existence of the group of people who are supposed to rule over indicates the existence of the hierarchical authority in the society. It seems obvious that the next verb describes the way the hierarchical authority is exercised. It clearly suggests that those who are in the ruling posts abuse their power and oppress the people under their rule. Mott also note the use of the term benefactor (*euergetes*) in the Lukan version (Lk 22.25). He holds that the use of this term indicates that what is negated by Jesus was the status distinction, not the use of force. *Ibid.*, p. 196. He summarises his discussion on Mk 10.43a as Jesus repudiation of the distinction of rank within the Christian community. *Ibid.*. If the term benefactor was an honorific title given by the people who received benefaction in gratitude to a human or divine benefactor, as Mott explicates, then it does not seem to carry negative connotation in the contemporary social milieu. Here Jesus does not seem to criticise the status system itself as represented by the term benefactor, but the use of the term for those who have authority over the people. We will have to remember that Jesus was referring to the secular practice in the negative sense: The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you (Lk 22.25-26a). Jesus repudiated not only the oppressive rule of the kings but the false designation of those who have power in that oppressive political system as benefactors. Jesus seem to be criticising that they are not true benefactors. It will also be noteworthy that Mott himself makes a self-contradictory remark by arguing on the one hand that what Jesus warns his disciples not to repeat within the Christian community is the hierarchical authority as observed in the state, and on the other hand that the function of the authority is acceptable inequality insofar as it is of service to everyone, but it does not carry any implication of superior dignity or worth. *Ibid.*. It seems obvious that Mott himself admits that what Jesus repudiates is *the way* the authority is exercised, not the existence of the hierarchical authority itself.

[36] Mott, *ibid.*, p. 196, observes the context in the Markan tradition where James and John request Jesus to grant them positions of highest honour in Christ's coming rule, and connects this with the status system. According to Mott, Jesus condemned the desire for status, not the existence of rank and authority in Jesus community. It seems that Jesus in effect did not condemn the desire of James and John for the position of the highest honour in Christ's rule, but only told them explicitly that the right to grant the honour did not belong to him ("not mine to grant", v. 40) and it will be granted to those for whom it has been prepared (v. 40). Also, Walter Wink, "Jesus and the Domination System," *SBL 1991 Seminar Papers*, p.270. According to Wink, "Jesus does not condemn ambition and aspiration; he merely changes the values to which they are attached. . . He does not reject power, but only its use

indirectly acknowledges that there will be leaders in his community corresponding to the rulers or great men of the Gentile world. But what he instructs his disciples is that within their community, such oppressive ruling as observed in the secular state must not be repeated.[37] The power-oriented and status-oriented mentality of the disciples is exposed and rejected.[38] What the disciples expected with the coming of the Kingdom of God is none other than the same privileges and power that the rulers and their great men enjoy in their political system. The domination system is not permitted in the community of the disciples.[39]

After this instruction, Jesus suggests a more radical motivating principle to his disciples: "whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all" (vv. 43b-44). The nature of Jesus' service may be explained as his laying down life for the many (Mk 10.45b).[40] However, we cannot exclude the possibility that the service refers to the image of the table service, another essential aspect of Jesus' mission distinct from his death. Jesus' service is referred to as the ground and motivation for his disciples.

Stephen C. Mott observes correctly that the terms great (*megas*) and first (*protos*) signify the desire for status.[41] Jesus subverted the concept of status by substituting

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to dominate others. He does not reject greatness, but finds it in identification and solidarity with the needy at the bottom of society (Mt 5.3-12/ Lk 6.20-23)." *Ibid.*

[37] Hugo Echegaray, *The Practice of Jesus* (New York: Orbis, 1984), p. 95, also admits that Jesus does not criticise the existence of power itself but the way power is exercised in the community of Christ: "In the community of Christ the only justification for the exercise of power is service and not the exploitation of authority for personal profit."

[38] Jesus made it clear that in Jesus community such power-oriented and status-oriented mentality should not even exist. However, it will not be correct to argue that Jesus denied the existence of such positions. What is negated by Jesus is *what the rulers and their great men do* in their positions: lord it over and exercise authority over. The picture of the rulers and their great men of the Gentiles is something familiar to the people. Jesus is contrasting the image of the Gentile rulers with the practice that his disciples should have.

[39] Lohfink, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

[40] Cf. J. Rodolff, "Anfanger der soteriologischen Deutung des Todes Jesu (Mk 10:45 und Lk 22:27)," *NTS*, pp. 38-64. He argues that the original meaning of Jesus' death is service and probably reflects Jesus own understanding of his death.

[41] Mott, *op. cit.*, p. 196. He draws a sharp distinction between class and status: "Class deals with the economic opportunities that an individual can expect in life by virtue of the group to which he or she belongs. It is related to property relations and economic power. It is objective. Status is subjective. It is based on the value the culture places on various groups of people." See his *Jesus and Social Ethics*, Grove Booklet on Ethics No. 55 (Nottingham: Hassall & Lucking Ltd., 1984), p. 11.

'great' with 'servant' (*diakonos*) and 'first' with 'slave (*doulos*) of all'. The meaning of becoming the *diakonos* and *doulos* of the people is clearly expressed in terms of the table serving in the Lukan version: "Who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves" (Lk 22.27).[42] Jesus made it clear that the service was table service. For Jesus, the image of table service has two implications. The table service is the opposite to the oppressive ruling of the secular state and Jesus' intention to subvert the status system is deliberately disclosed here. If Jesus who has a royal status as the Son of Man serves at the table, he is placing himself in the position of a slave,[43] thus subverting the concept of status within the society. Jesus was in effect instructing his disciples not to follow the oppressive rule of the secular state within the Christian community. What Jesus instructs his disciples is that they are to build a statusless community with a completely new type of relationship among its members.[44]

Summary

Jesus did not deny the existence of authority and power even with the Jesus community. Actually Jesus acknowledges that his disciples are placed in the leadership of the community, but radically redefines the way the authority and power are exercised. Jesus instructed his disciples that the primary purpose of authority and power was none other than service to the people. Although rulers exercised their power over the people, the disciples who are the leaders of Jesus community must use

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[42] It is generally accepted that Jesus use of the term service is authentic. Lohfink, *op. cit.*, p. 47, observes that Jesus practice of service must have motivated the early Christian community to use the term deacon (*diakonia*), i.e., service for their offices. If we read Acts 6.1-7 that records the selection of seven *diakonia*, our thesis will be supported. The disciples began to feel the need to devote themselves to prayer and to the serving the word rather than spending so much time on *serving the table* (Acts 6.2-4). In v. 1 it is described as the daily distribution of food. Thus, they decided to select seven men to carry out the ministry of serving the table, i.e., the daily distribution of food, who were called *diakonia*. Here, it is confirmed that the concept of service has something to do with table service.

[43] Jesus' saying in Mk 10.45a that he, as the Son of Man, came not to be served but to serve, actually indicates that he is entitled to be served. If Jesus as the Son of Man had the self-consciousness as the royal divine figure, it was natural for him to claim his right to be served. But he states that his mission is to serve the people. H. Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom*, p. 103, observed that the use of the verb *dei* indicates that Jesus mission as the Son of Man is determined at the heavenly counsel of God. He argues that the auxiliary verb "must" (*dei*) belongs to fixed apocalyptic terminology (Rev 1.1). Then, Jesus does not deny his royal right to be served, but he simply does not claim it.

[44] Lohfink, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

their positions to serve the people. What Jesus proclaims here is that the role of the disciples in authority and power must be service to the people, i.e., the *mokmin* praxis.

II.2. Helping the Poor *Min* as Community Responsibility

By showing the concrete examples of *mokmin* praxis through his ministry and life, Jesus indirectly inculcated his disciples on the spirit they had to embody as representatives of Jesus. At the same time, Jesus directly taught his disciples on several occasions to practise *mokmin* spirit by helping the poor *min*. In this section, we will examine several pericopae that record Jesus' direct instruction to his disciples concerning the *mokmin* praxis.

Bearing Fruit (Jn 15.1-17)

John 13-17 records Jesus' farewell discourse to his disciples on the night before his crucifixion. This farewell discourse of Jesus is important because Jesus imparts some of the most important teachings related to his disciples and the community of followers.[45]

a) *Jesus Community.* Jesus' use of the vine imagery does not seem to be accidental, but quite intentional in disclosing the essence of his ministry. Both Jesus and his disciples must have been familiar with the vine imagery, for it had long been used as one of the symbols for Israel, the covenant people of God.[46] In the Old Testament, the vine imagery was always employed to describe ethnic Israel, particularly in relation to

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[45] Jesus imparts the essence of his teachings to his disciples. Jesus teaches his disciples to keep his commandments (Jn 14.15, 21, 23; 15.14), to believe in the mutual indwelling of Father and Son (14.11), to abide in the vine (15.1-7, 9), to bear fruit (15.8) and to love one another (13.34-35; 15.12, 17). It seems significant that the sacrifice of Jesus is described as the basis of all these instructions. Cf. R.W. Raschal, Jr., "Farewell Discourse," *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, p. 232.

[46] G. Johnston, "The Allegory of the Vine: An Exposition of John 15.1-7," *CJT* 3 (1957), p. 152 and Anne Jaubert, "L'image de la Vigne (Jean 15)," *Oikonomia*, FS O. Cullmann, ed. F. Christ (Hamburg: Reich, 1967), pp. 93-99. E. Schweizer, *Ego Eimi* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939), pp. 39-41, argued that the vine imagery in Jn 15 did not come from the Old Testament- Jewish tradition, but from the myth of the tree of life found in the Mandaean literature. More recently, however, D.A. Carson asserted that the vine imagery in Jn 15 has the Old Testament as its background. He based his claim on the 'two decisive factors': (1) "the frequency of John's appeals to the Old Testament, both in allusions and in quotations, and (2) the dominance in the Fourth Gospel of the 'replacement' motif, for that motif strongly operates in this passage." *The Gospel According to John*, p. 513.

the exodus event (cf. Ps 80.8; Jer 2.21; Hos 10.1).[47] By claiming himself to be the true vine (v. 1), Jesus discloses himself to be the fulfilment of the Old Testament expectation concerning the restoration of the vine-Israel, the salvation of the people of Israel (cf. Ps 80.17-19), replacing ethnic Israel which failed to fulfil its calling to be fruitful for God.[48] If so, Jesus is the figure who fulfils the ideal of the ethnic Israel in its covenant relationship with God. This self-claim of the true vine, then, is none other than the proclamation of a new community. By declaring himself to be "the true vine," Jesus makes it clear that he is the inaugurator of the eschatological community of God.

There is something required from all members of this new community. It is fruit-bearing. In those Old Testament contexts where the vine imagery was used, the ethnic Israel is described as a degenerate vine which had failed in carrying out the covenant obligations toward God. In every instance when Israel was depicted as a vine or vineyard in the Old Testament, the nation was rebuked for its failure to produce good fruit that were expected from it.[49]

b) *Fruit-Bearing as Community Responsibility.* It is repeatedly emphasised that the members of this new community should bear fruit. If they do not bear fruit, God will throw them away. If they do not bear fruit by abiding in Christ they will be thrown into the fire to be burnt. By bearing fruit they will prove to be the disciples of Jesus. As the imagery of bearing fruit and judgement, together with that of the vine, came from the

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[47] In Ps 80.8 the vine is referred to as being transplanted from Egypt and made prosperous by the sovereign care of God, which is a clear allusion to the exodus event through which Israel experienced their salvation as God's chosen people.

[48] The word *alethinos* is used twenty-two times in the Johannine writings (Jn 1.9; 4.23, 37; 6.32; 7.28; 15.1; 17.3; 19.35; 1Jn 2.8; 5.20; Rev 3.7, 14; 6.10; 15.3; 16.7; 19.2, 9, 11; 21.5; 22.6) and five times in the rest of the New Testament (Lk 16.11; 1 Thess 1.9; Heb 8.2; 9.24; 10.22).

J. Blank, *The Gospel according to St. John* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), p. 182, claims that the adjective *alethinos* was not intended primarily as part of a contrast in which the true vine would be distinguished from others that make a similar but unjustified and false claim. R. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, II (New York: Doubleday, 1970), p. 674, also argued that Jesus' claim to be the true vine did not directly criticise a false vine. He asserted that Jesus simply claimed himself to be "the source of 'real' life, a life that can come only from above and from the Father."

However, as the vine imagery is closely linked with ethnic Israel, it would be fair to argue that Jesus intended to evoke the failure of Israel in its history to fulfil its covenant obligations as admonished by the prophets, and to teach his disciples that the advent of the eschatological people of God will replace the ethnic Israel as the legitimate partner of covenant.

[49] Carson, *op. cit.*, p. 512; G.R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (Dallas: Word Publishing Co., 1989), p. 272.

Old Testament, it will be our first task to examine what the imagery of bearing fruit implies in the Old Testament.

Jer 2.21. Jeremiah 2.1-4.4 forms a self-contained unit dealing with the harlotry of Israel. Chapter 2 provides us with what is perhaps the classic example of Jeremiah's attack upon the sins of his people.[50] In vv. 4-13, forgetfulness of Yahweh's past mighty works of salvation for his people is alleged to reach back to the beginning of Israel's life in the Promised Land, which led to a practice of apostasy so complete as to change gods (vv. 11f). In vv. 14-19 the prophet raises a question: how has Israel, who once had devotion to Yahweh in the desert and enjoyed God's protection (vv. 2-3), fallen into her present miserable situation? The answer is given: apostasy has brought this predicament upon her and no amount of political cleverness can save Israel from it (vv. 17-19). Jer. 2.20-28 records the evil committed by the people of Israel. Here, the nation's apostasy is characterised in a variety of figures: an ox that breaks its yoke, a vine that bears strange fruit, a stain that will not wash off, and the lust of a camel in the heat.

The nature of Israel's rebellion is depicted as Israel's abandonment of true faith and its resorting to the worship of the Canaanite deity, Baal. This perversion of Israel's religion is elaborated in v. 21 in terms of the metaphor of the vine. Yahweh planted Israel as a "choice vine, wholly of a pure seed." Being of pure seed, this vine should have produced a pure fruit. But the vine became a detestable plant without producing the expected fruit.

Isa 5.1-7. Isaiah 1-5 records prophecies about the ruin and restoration of Judah.[51] Isaiah begins with the divine indictment (Isa 1.2-4): "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; For the Lord has spoken, 'Sons have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against Me'" (v. 2). This verse, generally viewed as reflecting the thought and terminology of the international treaties, is interpreted to mean that Yahweh has bestowed blessings upon his people by delivering them from Egypt and that this act constitutes the basis of Israel's obligations towards her benefactor. This serves as a background against which God brings his covenant lawsuit and pronounces his divine judgement upon the people of Israel.

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[50] John Bright, *Jeremiah*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1978), p. 14.

Isa 5 records God's judgement on his guilty people. Isa 5.1-7 serves as a literary introduction of 5.8ff. The singer's friend had a vineyard in a good position on a hillside, with the added advantage of fertile soil, thus providing the basic conditions for good growth and ripening by the sun (v. 1). Before putting in the young vines, he did the necessary work of digging the top soil, removing the stones, and building a stone-wall round the edge of the vineyard (v. 2; cf. v. 5). The owner of the vineyard seemed to envisage using the field as a vineyard on a permanent basis and counted on a good harvest, for he built a permanent watch-tower (v.2).

With the harvest came the great disappointment: all the labour of preparation proved vain, because instead of bearing good grapes which had been expected, the vines only produced 'worthless ones' (v. 4). The witnesses were called upon to confirm the innocence of the accused (vv. 3-4). Then in vv. 5-6 the vineyard-owner himself pronounces judgement. The owner is identified as the Lord of hosts and the fruits he looked for from the house of Israel were clarified as justice and righteousness (v. 7).

The bearing of fruit refers to the observance of the covenant obligations by the people of Israel. The fruits are justice (*mispat*) and righteousness (*sedaqah*).[52] Justice and righteousness are the chief attributes of God. It is noteworthy that the justice and righteousness of God are referred to in relation to his acts in delivering the people of Israel from Egypt. Ps 103.6 says: The Lord performs righteous deeds (or righteousness, *sedaqah*) and judgement (or justice, mispat) for all who are oppressed. This general statement about God is more concretely applied in the next verse: "He made known his ways to Moses, His acts to the sons of Israel" (v. 7). This verse obviously refers to the Exodus, in which Israel was delivered from the state of slavery

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[51] R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 764.

[52] *Sedaqah* is translated as 'righteousness, vindication, deliverance, uprightness and right' etc. G. Von Rad drew attention to *sedaqah* as a concept understood in the Old Testament only in terms of relationship. Cf. G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 371. E. R. Achtemeier, "Righteousness in the Old Testament," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. G.A. Buttrick, vol. 4, p. 80, also states that righteousness is, in the Old Testament, the fulfilment of the demands of a relationship, whether that relationship be with men or with God. When applied to God, righteousness implies the covenant relationship which God has initiated with Israel. On the other hand, *mispat* is usually translated as 'justice or judgement'. The noun is derived from the verbal root *spt* which means to judge or to render judgement. Basically it has a forensic sense, dealing with judicial activity at every level, but it has a broader meaning, dealing with the rights due to every individual in the community and the upholding of those rights. Cf. Birch, *Let Justice Roll Down,* p. 155.

and made into a nation. The Song of Deborah speaks of the righteous deeds (*sedaqot*, pl.) of the Lord, which clearly indicates the acts of salvation by which God called Israel into being.[53] God, as the lover of justice (Ps 99.4), is referred to as the source of care for the right of every person in the social structures of the covenant community: "The Lord of hosts is exalted by justice" (Isa 5.16). The justice that God expected is described as learning to do good, reproving the ruthless, defending the orphan and pledging for the widow (Isa 1.17). What the Lord expected from his covenant people was social justice regardless of piety and worship (cf. Isa 58.6-10).

Ezek 15.1-8. Ezek 15 is a parable of the worthless vine. This pericope (vv. 1-8) has three parts: the introductory formula (v.1), a parable of the vine (vv. 2-5), and an interpretation (vv. 6-8). The 'vine branch' that represents the inhabitants of Jerusalem (v. 6) is among the trees in the forest (v. 2). This underlines Israel's relative insignificance as a nation.[54] As people would not use it for a peg to hang any vessel on, so Israel was considered neither useful nor dependable. The inhabitants of Jerusalem will be given up to destruction by fire to be burned and destroyed completely. It is said in v. 8 that the unfaithful acts of the people were the cause of the divine punishment.

Although we cannot find any direct reference to the failure of fruit bearing in the immediate context, it will be safe to say that it is implied here. As Taylor pointed out, it is the fruit-bearing properties of the vine that make it so highly esteemed among men, but in the life of Israel as a nation, they failed to manifest them.[55] Thus, God sent his warning through Ezekiel that, as a vine failed to produce fruit is worthless except as fuel, so the unfaithful people of Israel will be destroyed by divine judgement. The phrase 'acted unfaithfully' in v. 8 was used several times in Ezekiel (14.13; 15.8; 17.20; 18.24; 20.27). In Ezek 14.13, the 'unfaithfulness' of the people of Israel was referred to as sins against the Lord. In its immediate context (14.1-12), the sins of the house of Israel were repeatedly described as taking their idols into their hearts and setting the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces (vv. 3, 4, 6, 7). In Ezek 17.20, the 'unfaithful act' of the house of Israel was described as despising or breaking God's covenant. In chapter 18, the unfaithfulness of Israel is repeatedly described as

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[53] Birch, *ibid.*, p. 154.

[54] Taylor, *Ezekiel*, p. 131.

(1) worshipping idols (vs. 6, 11, 15) and (2) social injustice (vs. 6-9, 11-13, 15-18). The 'unfaithful acts' of the people of Israel are referred to as either the idol worship or social injustice.

In summing up, the fruit that God expected from his covenant people of Israel was 1) true worship of God and 2) the execution of social justice within the community of God's covenant people. In the Old Testament, the vine imagery was used in relation to the exodus event through which God delivered the people of Israel from its bondage in Egypt. The exodus event was the fundamental basis for the existence of Israel as the people of God.[56] Clements also argues that both the election of Israel through theexodus and the covenant which defined their obligations as receivers of God's deliverance belong inseparably together. Thus, when the prophets referred to the exodus, they were emphasising the fact that Israel was a covenant people.[57] The allusions to the exodus bear witness to the determinative significance of Israel's status as a covenant people. This means that, on the basis of their deliverance from servitude into freedom, they were given a standard of conduct toward God and toward other members of the covenant, with the warning that failure to fulfil these demands would result in the divine punishment.

Mokmin Practice as Covenant Obligation (Mt 25.31-46)

This pericope is part of Jesus' discourse on the Mount of Olives (Mt 24.3-25.46) which was addressed privately to his disciples (Mt 24.3; cf. Mt 26.1).

a) *Identity of the Nations.* This pericope describes the eschatological judgement of all the nations. At the judgement scene, the sheep who will inherit the Kingdom of God are separated from the goats who will be handed to eternal suffering. Here, another group of people appear, i.e., those who are poor and oppressed. The sheep and the goats are separated on the basis of what they did to these poor and oppressed people.

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[55] *Ibid.*

[56] R.E. Clements, *Prophecy and Covenant* (London: SCM, 1965), p. 45.

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

Jesus' teaching concerns all the nations, for its message is directly related to their future destiny. Jesus made it clear that they will enter either into eternal life or eternal punishment solely on the basis of what they did to the least of the brethren of the Son of Man. Gutierrez, following Jean-Claude Ingelaere, distinguishes three ways of interpreting "all the nations"[58]: i) all persons including both Christians and non-Christians,[59] ii) Christians, and iii) the pagans.[60] It is not our concern here to determine the identity of the nations, but there is one obvious thing that we find about the identity of the nations. Whether they are Christians, non-Christians, or pagans, it is clear that they do not belong to the group of the poor and oppressed people.

b) *The Identity of "the least of my brethren".* Jesus identifies himself with the poor and the oppressed. We need to examine the pericope to find out the identity of the least of the brethren of the Son of Man,[61] for, once the identity of this group of people is given, the teaching of Jesus in this pericope will become clear.

Ramsey Michaels argues that "the least of these" with whom Jesus identifies himself are not the poor of the world but the twelve disciples who represent Jesus on earth, and interprets the sheep as those who gladly receive the word of Jesus' disciples and demonstrate their faith by hospitality and works of love to the messengers.[62] He observes the similarities between Mt 25.31-46 and Mt 10.40-42: i) In both passages certain people are identified with Jesus. In Mt 25, they are "the least", and in Mt 10, little ones. ii) The good works in Mt 25 are paralleled in Mt 10.42 as a cup of cold water. iii) As in Mt 25, Mt 10.40-42 distinguishes between two groups of the redeemed: the little ones who specifically defined as disciples (v. 42) and the other

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[58] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1990), p. 112.

[59] Cf. Dan O. Via, "Ethical Responsibility and Human Wholeness in Matthew 25:31-46," *HTR* 80:1 (1987), pp. 79-100.

[60] Cf. J.M. Court, "Right and Left: The Implications for Matthew 25:31-46," *NTS* 31 (1985), pp. 223-233. He interprets "all the nations" as designating pagans who may be regarded as righteous on the basis of what they did for the proclaimers of the gospel.

[61] Jean-Claude Ingelaere, "La 'parabole' du Jugement Dernier (Matthieu 25:31-46)," *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 50:1 (1970), pp. 23-60, saw these questions of identity as the central issue of this pericope.

[62] J. Ramsey Michaels, "Apostolic Hardships and Righteous Gentiles: A Study of Matthew 25.31-46," *JBL*, 84 (1965), pp. 27-37

group, defined as he who receives [them] (v. 40), to whom the reward will be given.[63] Michaels concludes that the least of these in Mt 25.40 are Jesus' disciples. Jesus, about to terminate his earthly ministry, explains to his disciples the prospect of hardship and suffering and at the same time gives the promise that men will be eternally judged on the basis of their response to these 'little ones', Jesus' representatives on earth after his departure, who speak to them the word of God.[64] Jesus' disciples are not so much called upon to *help* the poor as they are to become poor and outcast themselves in the completion of their world mission.[65]

This interpretation seems to be incorrect. Michaels' interpretation, which Gundry seems to follow, is based on the assumption that Mt 25.31-46 and Mt 10.40-42 are parallel passages, and relies simply on the reading of Mt 10.40-42 in drawing out the identity of "the least of these" in Mt 25.40. *First*, Jesus identifies himself with his disciples, not with the little ones. *Second*, in Mt 25 the least of these are those who are in poverty and oppression, whereas in Mt 10.40-42 no reference to the difficult situation is given. *Third*, the two distinct groups of people in Mt 10 are disciples and those who receive the disciples. The identity of the little ones are rather obscure. It is true that Jesus identifies himself with his disciples in v. 40. Those who receive a prophet and a righteous man will be rewarded in heaven correspondingly to their deed (v. 41), and in v. 42 even those who give cold water to one of the little ones in the name of disciple will obtain a heavenly reward. In v. 40, Jesus used the second person plural pronoun you to address his disciples to encourage them by saying that those who receive them will be rewarded. In this dialogical context, it seems inappropriate for Jesus to address his disciples as the little ones. As in v. 40, in v. 42 Jesus uses the expression I say to *you* (second person plural pronoun) in addressing his disciples. It is difficult then to equate the little ones with Jesus' disciples. To seek the identity of "one of these little ones" in Mt 10.42, we will have to examine Mt 18.6 *pars.* where the same expression is used.

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[63] *Ibid*, p. 28.

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 37. For a similar interpretation, see Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), pp. 511-516.

Mt 18.1-5 records Jesus' answer to his disciples' question concerning the greatest in heaven. Jesus called a child and have him stand in the midst of them, and then gave them the answer. Jesus elucidated that the greatest in heaven must turn and become like children, i.e., humble himself like the child standing in their midst. By saying that anyone who receives such a child is receiving Jesus himself, he identifies himself with the child. Also, Jesus warns that to make a child stumble is worse than to drown him deep into the sea. Here, the child was not introduced as an example of discipleship.[66] Jesus did not call the child and put him in the midst of the group because he is an exemplary disciple for them to follow. It was only to emphasise the fact that Jesus' disciples must have the quality found in the child. In Mk 9.42 "one of the little ones" clearly designates a child.[67] Mk 9.33 reports that Jesus was in the house and it was in Mk 10.1 that Jesus left the house. The dialogue between Jesus and his disciples recorded in Mk 9.33-10.1 happened in the house. In Mk 9.36 Jesus calls a child and takes him in his arms, and the dialogue continues. In this context, it seems to be most appropriate to interpret v. 42 "one of the little ones" as designating an actual child. Moreover, the warning not to scandalise the children is given to none other than Jesus' disciples themselves.[68] Thus, it is difficult to identify "the little ones" with Jesus' disciples.[69]

If we have to interpret "the little ones" used in Mt 18.6 pars. as designating actual children, it becomes difficult to identify "the little ones" in Mt 10.42 with disciples. Even if we take "the little ones" as Jesus' disciples, they may still designate actual

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[66] *Contra* Michaels, *ibid.*, p. 37.

[67] Michaels, *ibid.*, p. 37, holds that the little ones in Mt 18.6 do not designate actual children nor the disciples, but the young, the poor, and the weak within the Christian church. This interpretation seems to be based on the reference to their belief in Jesus. However, this is mere conjecture, and can be criticised as a discriminatory in that he denies the possibility for children to have faith in Jesus. At the same time this interpretation refutes his own argument that the child was introduced as an exemplary disciple.

[68] The addressee of Jesus' warning (Mk 9.42: "if any one of *you*. . .") clearly indicates his disciples. In Mt 18.1-6 it is more clearly stated that Jesus' warning not to scandalise the little ones is addressed to his disciples.

[69] Even though we may accept Michaels' assertion that the point that Jesus is trying to convey in Mt 18.6-14 is that his disciples should not scandalise these little ones, but identify themselves with them, we still have two distinct groups (i.e., disciples and children). The fact that Jesus' disciples are exhorted to identify with these little ones means that the two groups are not identical. Jesus' disciples are not the little ones. They are only warned by Jesus to become *like* the little ones.

children because it is not improbable that children can become Jesus' disciples. We may conclude that "the least of my brethren" in Mt 25.31-46 cannot be identified with Jesus' disciples merely on the basis of the parallelism between Mt 25.31-46 and Mt 10.40-42.[70]

In Mt 25, the words *the least* in "the least of these my brethren" must be interpreted as containing the idea dradation. They are a particular group of people among Jesus brethren. In other words, *the least* constitute just a part of the people whom Jesus calls *my brethren*. Who, then, are Jesus' brethren? i) The people whom Jesus designate as his brethren are his disciples in the broad sense of the word. Not only Jesus twelve disciples but all those who do the will of God are called to be Jesus brothers. In Mt 18.15-22, the term "brother" refers to relationship among Jesus' followers. It will be correct to see that those whom Jesus calls his brethren are all those who belong to Jesus community. The least *of my brethren* refer to a specific group of people among those whom Jesus call his brethren.[71] The least of Jesus' brethren, that is, of Jesus community are those described in vv. 35-36: those who are hungry, thirsty, naked and sick; a stranger; and those who are in prison. ii) Conversely, here,we may assume that Jesus is proclaiming those who are hungry, thirsty, naked and the sick, the stranger and those who are in prison as his brethren. The Greek construction of this phrase, *the least of these, of my brethren*, makes this interpretation possible. Here, *these* refer to the categories of people mentioned above. What Jesus is saying here is the importance of helping one of the least of these categories of people. What makes this deed important is the fact that they are Jesus' brethren. This does not mean that they are Jesus brethren in an exclusive way, but emphasises their brothership of Jesus. We may admit the possibility to interpret both i) and ii), and combine them together. The least of these Jesus brethren designate i) a specific group of people within the

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[70] Although admitting the close parallelism between these two passages, Via, "Right and Left," p. 92, points out the difference between the sheep in Mt 25 and those who give a cup of water in Mt 10.42. The sheep do not know those whom they care for are disciples of Jesus, whereas those who give cold water in 10.42 do know. He notes the use of *eis* that means *because* and reads that the righteous gives the cold water *because* the person is a disciple.

[71] *Contra* R.T. France, *Matthew*, p. 357, who argues that it is inappropriate to relate the least of these to a specific group. According to his reading, the least of these are not to be identified with any specific group because Jesus' brethren are not to be identified with any specific group. So he interprets Mt 25.40 as meaning that it is in *any* brother of Jesus, however insignificant, that Jesus himself is

Jesus community and ii) those who are not regarded as legitimate members of Jesus community but declared by Jesus as his brethren, i.e., the poor and the oppressed. The word 'least' does not designate their rank or status in the society It must be taken as depicting simply their situation in need of help from other people. Thus, we can take the term as designating all the needy, whoever they may be, and not only Christians.[72]

c) *Helping the Poor as Covenant Obligation.* In this pericope, God's preferential option for the poor is dramatically confirmed.[73] The criterion which separates the blessed from the cursed is what 'all the peoples of the world' did to the poor and needy. Gundry makes an important observation that the description of what the righteous did for the needy (vv. 35-36) is a paraphrase of Isa 58.7: "Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?" This verse is part of the passage in Isa 58 which defines the type of fasting that God demands. In communicating God's message to the people of Israel, Isaiah combines the execution of social justice with the true form of spirituality and worship of God. As we have explained above, execution of social justice and restoration of true worship of God are two pillars of Israel's covenant obligation. Here, the commands to worship God and to establish social justice are held inseparably. Via maintains that in this pericope the religious requirement to love God and the ethical requirement to love one's neighbours are united.[74] The teaching of this pericope becomes clear: all persons including pagans, Jews, and Christians will be judged at the parousia of the royal Son of Man based on what they did to one of the poor and the oppressed people whether they are Christians or non-Christians.

***Helping the Poor as Community Responsibility* (Mt 26.2-13/ Mk 14.3-9/ Jn 12.1-8)**

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served. This seems a complete misreading of the verse, resulting from his mistake in equating the least of these with Jesus brethren.

[72] Pierre Bonnard, *L'Evangile selon Saint Matthieu,* p. 367. See also Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 112; J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, p. 143.

[73] J. Lapoorta, "'. . . whatever you did for one of the least of these . . . you did for me' (Matt. 25:31-46)," *Journal of Theology in Southern Africa* 63 (1989), p. 105.

[74] Via, "Right and Left," p. 94.

When Jesus was at the meal table in Simon the leper's house, a woman came with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment and poured it on Jesus head. At this, Jesus' disciples became indignant and rebuked the woman, saying that it could be sold to help the poor. Jesus calmed his disciples down and told them not to trouble her, and said, "The poor are always with you" (Mk 14.7 *pars*). Although Jesus said that in response to his disciples' angry reaction to the woman's deed, Jesus' remark reveals his perception of the poor and of the communal responsibility towards them.

First, the angry response of Jesus' disciples reveals something significant concerning Jesus' attitude towards the poor. Sugirtharajah interprets that the angry reaction of Jesus' disciples was due to their failure in grasping Jesus' intention and that Jesus was not pleased with their reaction. [75] He argues that Jesus must have made this remark "in a sarcastic, playful tone and one of those mysterious oriental smiles on his face, for Jesus knew that the problem of poverty would not be solved by selling the ointment". [76] However, this reading seems to be superficial, and a careful reading of the context will reveal something different. This episode occurred at a table where Jesus, his disciples and other guests, including Simon the leper the host, are gathered together. Even though we may admit that Jesus' disciples reacted this way because they failed to read Jesus' intention, it is hardly imaginable that they reacted in such a way in that particular situation. If they rebuked the woman who was performing something special for their teacher when their teacher was ready to accept her, then it would have the effect of insulting their own teacher publicly. In other words, it should have been Jesus who was expected to stop her wasting such expensive ointment, for the woman was performing the act for Jesus. If Jesus' disciples failed to read Jesus' intention and criticised the woman who already poured the ointment on the head of Jesus, it would mean that the disciples put Jesus into a great embarrassment. If Jesus acquiesced to the woman's behaviour, it would become a serious matter, for the disciples' reaction will amount to a challenge to their teacher's authority. In a situation where other people are also present, it is unthinkable for the disciples to contradict their teacher's intention, thus bringing shame on him. It will then be most appropriate

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[75] R.S. Sugirtharajah, "For you always have the Poor with you: an example of hermeneutics of suspicion," *AJT* 4 (1990), p. 104.

[76] *Ibid.*

to interpret that the disciples must have reacted in such a way because of the conviction that they were representing Jesus' mind. Without such confidence it seems impossible for the disciples to take the initiative in rebuking the woman. Jesus' response to his disciples supports this interpretation. Jesus did not attack his disciples who put him in an embarrassing situation, but just have them calmed down not to trouble the woman, indirectly endorsing their angry reaction. At the same time, by placing important meaning to what the woman did for him, Jesus also justifies the woman's behaviour. If it is correct to interpret Jesus' response as endorsing both his disciples' indignant reaction and the woman's act of pouring the expensive ointment on his head, this attitude of his disciples represents Jesus' teaching and practice concerning the poor. It must have been the consistent teaching and practice of Jesus to help the poor during his earthly ministry.

Secondly, Jesus' remark that the poor are always with them seems to emphasise that they should help the poor consistently. The fact that the poor are *always* with them reinforces that their concern for the poor should not be temporary but consistent. By specifying the addressees of his remark in saying, "the poor are always *with you* (second person plural pronoun)," Jesus is placing the responsibility to help the poor on his disciples, the members of Jesus' community they represent and all the people present there. Jesus' disciples were directing attention to the woman's wasting of the expensive ointment, but Jesus is diverting the attention to the responsibility of his own disciples and other people at present to help the poor.

Thirdly, it seems to be more proper to interpret Jesus' remark as emphasising the responsibility to help the poor on the individual dimension, rather than as a revolutionary reform of the social structure in favour of the poor.[77] Sugirtharajah correctly points out that Deut 15.11 is behind this remark of Jesus and so Jesus' teaching is related to the demand of God recorded in the whole of Deut 15. He argues that what Jesus intends to teach here is not to engage in piecemeal charitable acts but to follow the radical social redesign envisioned in Deuteronomy, which his disciples failed to perceive. According to Sugirtharajah, Deut 15 introduces the Sabbatical year reforms to overturn the widening division in the society, envisaging a radical social restoration. The purpose of introducing the sabbatical regulations was to counter the

increasing social injustice manifested in the form of landlordism, money lending and slavery, as the only way to prevent permanent pauperisation. Unless there is a collective conversion to solidarity with the marginalized, the poor will continue to be with us. Hence, Sugirtharajah argues that what Jesus envisaged was the programmatic Deuteronomic call: "Jesus reckoned and rightly so, that charity does not remove destitution. Stereotypically put, the routine relief-works the disciples wanted to promote perpetuate the process of pauperisation rather than eradicating it. What is required if one means business is a radical restructuring of economic resources."[78]

Although it is correct to relate Jesus' remark to the message of Deut 15, the content of Deut 15 does not seem to support Sugirtharajah's interpretation. i) there is no evidence that Jesus' disciples thought that they would be able to solve the problem of poverty by selling the woman's ointment and giving the money to the poor. ii) Even in Deut 15 where the sabbatical regulations are introduced, helping the poor on the individual dimension is repeatedly emphasised. It is strongly exhorted to help the poor on an individual level regardless of the execution of the institutional reform. It is commanded that, with the approach of the year of remission, they should not treat their needy neighbours with enmity, giving them nothing. They are to give liberally and ungrudgingly. This provision to help the poor on the individual level was commanded side by side with institutional reform. The commandment to open their hand to the poor and needy neighbour in their land definitely emphasises the importance of the individual charitable acts, admitting the limitation of institutional reform. When there is a poor person in one's neighbourhood who wants to borrow, they were commanded not to become hard-hearted or tight-fisted, but to lend willingly enough to meet their needs. It is particularly emphasised that they should lend even when the year of remission approached, not expecting to have them repaid. Deut 15.11, a conclusion of these commandments, clearly states that there will never cease to be someone in need on the earth regardless of the radical social restructuring of resources.[79]

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[77] *Contra* Sugirtharajah, *ibid.*, 104-105.

[78] *Ibid.*, 104.

[79] Allen Verhey, *The Great Reversal. Ethics and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), p. 18, holds that the statement of Deut 15.11 reflects the failure of the people of Israel to keep the covenant stipulations for the alleviation of poverty. However, Deut 15 does not give any explanation on the origin of the poverty.

Jesus' remark that "the poor are always with you" is to encourage those who are non-poor members of Jesus community to help the poor voluntarily and consistently on the personal dimension regardless of the execution of institutional reforms. What is emphasised was the self-forgetful generosity in helping the poor, which is directly related to the coming Kingdom of God. The failure to act upon this demand will be faced with divine judgement (Mt 25.31-36; Lk 16.19-31).[80]

***Feeding the Sheep* (Jn 21.15, 16, 17)**

Jn 21 is the report of one of Jesus' post-resurrectional appearances. The focal point in Jn 21 is Peter's commission (vv. 15-17). Most exegetes have interpreted this dialogue between Jesus and Peter in relation to the question whether the authoritative commission is given exclusively to Peter or that the same apostolic mission is conferred on the other disciples. The Roman Catholic scholars who uphold the papal succession of apostolic authority interpret this command as disclosing Peter's special authority in the early Church.[81] While acknowledging the fact that Jn 21.15-17 reveals an authoritative commission of Peter, Protestant exegetes refuse to draw a sharp line between the apostolic mission and special authoritative commission.[82] These two strands of interpretation seem to be anachronistic in the sense that they understand the Jesus-Peter dialogue as reflecting later historical situations. Instead we have to interpret this command against the background in *Sitz im Leben Jesu*. The questions we have to raise in connection with this dialogue will be: *whom* Peter would have thought of when he was commanded by Jesus to feed [his] sheep? or how Peter would have understood the command *to feed*?

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[80] *Ibid.*

[81] The First Vatican Council in 1870, citing Jn 21.15-17 and Mt 16.16-19, states its dogmatic position on Peter's exclusive authority: "Peter the apostle was constituted by Christ the Lord as chief of all the apostles and as visible head of the Church on earth." Cf. Brown, *John*, p. 1116.

[82] Oscar Cullmann, *Peter, disciple, apostle, martyr: a historical and theological study* (London: SCM Press, 1953), p. 65, argues that the command to Peter includes both general apostolic mission and special authoritative commission by stating: "The command to feed the sheep includes two activities which we have shown to be the successive expressions of Peter's apostate: leadership of the Primitive Church in Jerusalem and missionary preaching." For a similar interpretation, see Brown, *John*, pp. 1112-1117.

a) *Jesus' Sheep: People of the Land.* The command that Peter receives from Jesus is to feed Jesus' own sheep. This means that Peter is commissioned to feed Jesus' sheep as a sub-shepherd, i.e., as the leader of the Jesus community.[83] It is not completely incorrect to equate Jesus' sheep with all the Christian members of the Church (cf. 1 Pet 5.1-4), for it seems to be anachronistic to relate the sheep mentioned in this particular context to those who become Christians through the missionary work of Jesus' disciples, including Peter. It will be more appropriate to say that Peter would have thought of those people with whom Jesus associated and whom Jesus described as his sheep during his earthly ministry. We then have to identify Jesus sheep against the background of his earthly ministry.

Jesus claims himself as the Good Shepherd (Jn 10) and describes those who were following him as sheep without a shepherd. These people whom Jesus depicted as sheep without a shepherd were the anonymous crowd who followed Jesus from all towns (Mt 9.35-36; Mk 6.33). In Mt 9.36 Jesus describes the crowds as "harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd." The harassed and helpless crowds are none other than the poor and oppressed people in Israel. In Mk 6.34 Jesus also referred to the people who were following him as sheep without a shepherd. Jesus told his disciples, who requested to disperse the crowds for them to buy food, to give them something to eat (v. 37). As Jesus knew that his disciples did not have enough bread to distribute among the crowds or money to buy food for them, it should be taken to mean that Jesus intended to point out the role his disciples had to play in their relationship with the crowds.[84]

b) *Feeding: Meeting the Needs of People.* Jesus gave Peter the mission to feed or to tend Jesus' sheep. It will be most appropriate to say that Peter would have understood Jesus' command to feed his flock in its literal sense. During his earthly ministry Jesus

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[83] Bultmann, *John*, p. 712.

[84] According to Mark, the disciples have just returned from their mission journey (Mk 6.6b-13). Before they set out for their mission, Jesus himself gave them the order to take nothing "except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts" (Mk 6.8). If it be so, Jesus, who was well aware of the lack of resources on the part of his disciples, could have intended to teach their role in relation to the crowds by saying, "You give them something to eat' in Mk 6.37.

did feed people who were following him like sheep without a shepherd (Mk 6.34). Seeing the crowd Jesus asked his disciples to give them something to eat and have them practise table serving by setting the broken loaves and fish before the people. It is indirectly revealed in Acts 6.2 that Peter and other disciples understood this commission of Jesus in a literal way. In Acts 6.2 the twelve disciples summoned the body of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables." It seems to be evident that the twelve disciples were concentrating their ministry on helping those in need, so much so that they were not able to spare enough time for the preaching of the word. This verse shows clearly that the twelve disciples placed priority of their mission on the table serving.

The two verbs *bosko* and *poimaino* that Jesus uses here to describe Peter's mission give clue in illuminating the nature of his mission. Although these two words are considered synonymous, they show slightly different meaning. While *bosko* is used to refer to the feeding of animals literally or figuratively (Ezek 34.2), *poimaino* has a broader meaning of 'ruling and governing' as well as 'guiding, guarding and feeding.'[85] These two verbs express the nature of the pastoral task commissioned to Peter. Brown asserts that these verbs convey the idea of both the responsibility of Peter for the flock and his authority over it.[86] He maintains that Peter's authority is, as in the shepherd imagery in the Old Testament, a divinely delegated authority to rule over the flock, i.e., in the community of Jesus as its leader.[87] However, we will have to read Jesus' command to Peter not against the Old Testament background but against the background of Jesus' earthly ministry. There should be a leader within Jesus community who will take care of Jesus' flock on his behalf. In this sense, Jesus' commission to Peter places him in the position of community leader, but it does not mean a hierarchical authority. The authority of a leader is validated in his giving up his life for his sheep. The fact that *bosko* and *poimaino* are combined to describe Peter's mission is significant in that each verb qualifies the other. Feeding the sheep defines the content of ruling and governing. At the same time ruling and governing draws its legitimacy only from feeding the people. Ruling and governing are required

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[85] Brown, *John*, p. 1105.

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 1114.

functionally to take care of those who lack the capability to meet their own basic needs. Thus, it is not a hierarchical but a functional authority. No superior status is granted to the leader.

Conclusion

Jesus selected his twelve disciples to be representatives of Jesus community and transmitters of his teachings. It must be admitted that Jesus' disciples are given the authority to be leaders within Jesus community, but the authority is defined exclusively in terms of service. The essence of Jesus' teaching to his disciples is to practise and embody the *mokmin* spirit exemplified by his life and mission. The *mokmin* praxis that Jesus demanded of his disciples was to be manifested in their effort to build a statusless community and to help the poor members within that community. Jesus' performance of foot-washing shows in a dramatic way the content of *mokmin* praxis.

[87] *Ibid.*

Chapter Six. Jesus and *Mokmin* Spirit (III): Pedagogy of the Oppressors

Introduction

It has often been argued that Jesus excluded *both* the Jewish religious leaders *and* the rich and the powerful from the coming Kingdom of God. Is the Kingdom of God related only to the poor and the oppressed? Are the rich and the powerful condemned, leaving no hope for them to be accepted into the kingdom of God? Is it only the reversal of fortune that awaits them in the future? It is our thesis that one of the major aspects of Jesus' ministry was to be the pedagogue of the oppressors. This aspect of Jesus' mission was more radical than his siding with the poor *min* in Jewish society, for the cause of Jesus' death was his demand for *mokmin* spirit from the Jewish religious leaders and the rich people.

I. Jesus and the Jewish Religious Leaders

I.1. Jesus as the Pedagogue of the Jewish Religious Leaders

Although minjung theologians argue that Jesus associated exclusively with the poor and oppressed people in society, it must also be noted that Jesus did not exclude the Jewish religious leaders from his fellowship (cf. Lk 11.37-41; 14.1-14). Regardless of the response of the religious leaders, Jesus demonstrated the pedagogical nature of his ministry toward Jewish religious leaders. Although Jesus' ministry is perceived as a series of confrontation with the Jewish religious leaders, it must not be interpreted as a confrontation for confrontation's sake. Jesus' conflict with the religious leaders was intentional on the part of Jesus, for Jesus intentionally broke the religious regulations in Judaism.[1] We may find Jesus' didactic intention in the story of his healing the paralytic (Mk 2.1-11/ Mt 9.2-8/ Lk 5.17-26) and the parable of the wicked tenants (Mk 12.1-12 *pars*). At the same time, it is also important to examine how the Jewish religious

[1] Though perceiving the character of Jesus' ministry as a series of conflict with the Jewish religious leaders, Jack Dean Kingsbury alludes that Jesus' conflict with the religious authorities had the pedagogical purpose: "[The] conflict between Jesus and the authorities in Mark's story is an extended clash over 'authority'. Instead of *receiving* Jesus as God's Messiah and Son, they oppose him throughout his ministry" (emphasis mine). See his "The Religious Authorities in the Gospel of Mark," *NTS* 36 (1990), p.63. Here, Kingsbury clearly indicates that through the conflicts, Jesus actually challenged the religious authorities to accept him as God's Messiah and Son.

leaders perceived Jesus for their understanding of his identity helps to illuminate the relationship between Jesus and the religious leaders.

Jesus as Teacher

The Gospel writers report that the Jewish leaders perceived Jesus as "Teacher".[2] J. C. Pallares observes that Jesus was acknowledged by his adversaries, i.e., the Jewish religious leaders, as a teacher.[3] The Pharisees not only perceived Jesus as the teacher of the disciples in their accusation of him eating with tax-gatherers and sinners (Mt 9.11) but they also, together with the Herodians, addressed Jesus as "Teacher" (Mk 12.14). The Sadducees were not an exception in addressing Jesus as "Teacher" (cf. Mk 12.19).

Religious Leaders as Jesus' Audience

a) *Jesus' Ministry in the Synagogues.* The Gospel writers report that visiting the synagogues was a major part of Jesus' public ministry (Mk 1.35-39/ Mt 4.23-25/ Lk 4.42-44). Jesus said that his mission was to proclaim the message (Mk 1.39), i.e., the good news of the kingdom of God (Lk 4.44), to the cities. It is significant to point out here that in Mk, as well as in Mt and Lk, Jesus' proclamation of the message is linked with synagogues.[4] This observation suggests that those present in the synagogue were the major audience of Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God. i) In Mk 1.21, Jesus entered the synagogue in Capernaum on the Sabbath and taught people who were present in the synagogue. It is significant that Jesus performed his first healing ministry in the synagogue on the Sabbath, which indicates that Jesus had the religious leaders in mind as his audience. ii) Jesus entered the synagogue again (Mk 3.1-6).

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[2] Robins, *Jesus the Teacher,* p. 114, observes that the fundamental basis of Jesus' identity was his teaching activity. So Jesus was perceived primarily as a teacher in Jewish society.

[3] Jose Cardenas Pallares, *A Poor Man Called Jesus: Reflections on the gospel of Mark* (New York: Orbis, 1986), p. 72.

[4] Mark describes Jesus' early ministry as proclaiming the message in the synagogues throughout Galilee (Mk 1.39). Luke also reports that Jesus continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea (Lk 4.44). Matthew also highlights the synagogue as the major location for Jesus' ministry: "Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people" (Mt 4.23).

Mark reports the presence of the people in the synagogue who were watching the movement of Jesus: "*They* watched him to see whether he would cure [the man with a withered hand] on the Sabbath, so that *they* might accuse him" (v. 2). The people in the synagogue who were watching Jesus were none other than the Pharisees, for Mark reports that it was the Pharisees who went out of the synagogue immediately after Jesus' healing and conspired to destroy him. If this is so, Jesus was teaching and performing the healing in the synagogue with the religious leaders fully in mind. iii) In Mk 6.2, Jesus entered the synagogue in his hometown and taught there. iv) Jesus taught in the Jerusalem temple (Mk 11.17; 12.35). v) Jesus said to the crowd who came to arrest him that he was in the temple teaching day after day (Mk 14.49).

b) *Jesus' Announcement of Divine Authority* (Mk 2.1-11/Mt 9.2-8/ Lk 5.17-26). The pericope of Mk 2.1-12 *pars.* presents the first encounter between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders. Here the scribes appear as the audience of Jesus' teaching. In the dialogue mainly between Jesus and the scribes, it discreetly disclosed that he not only provoked the religious leaders intentionally but challenged them to accept him as the one with divine authority. This pericope is significant in that Jesus' pedagogical intention was disclosed toward the Jewish religious leaders.

We should note that it was in Mk 2.1-11 *par.* that the religious leaders were first introduced as Jesus' audience.[5] The story reports that some of the scribes were sitting in the house at Capernaum listening to Jesus' teaching.[6] Considering that the whole villager was eager to meet Jesus, the fact that the scribes were able to secure space to sit in the house suggests that they were also eager to meet Jesus as most of the village people did.[7]

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[5] Hooker, *The Gospel according to St Mark*, p. 86, argues that the sudden introduction of the Jewish leaders appears artificial on the basis of the observation that the unspoken criticism suggests that it was made on a later occasion. However, given the fact that it was their first encounter with Jesus, their response is quite plausible, for they could not have had any pre-conceived idea about Jesus' identity.

[6] Pallares, *A Poor Man Called Jesus*, p. 6, is wrong to perceive that it was a throng of poor who rushed to meet Jesus who is poor. He also states: "Such is the place where one might come to meet Jesus and where a miraculous cure is performed. The place where the power of God will be made manifest is poor person's hut. This is where Jesus' word will be heard." *Ibid.* However, it is hard to generalise in this way. According to Mark, the first miracle was not performed in the poor person's hut, but in the synagogue (Mk 1.21-28). Jesus proclaimed the message in the synagogues in Capernaum and in the neighbouring towns (Mk 1.39).

We should take Jesus' remark in Mk 2.5, "Your sins are forgiven," as an intentional provocation of the Jewish religious leaders for the following reasons.[8] i) Jesus must have been well aware of the presence of the scribes. It is impossible to imagine that Jesus was ignorant of the fact that his saying would scandalise the scribes among his audience. Seeing that it was only the scribes who reacted negatively against Jesus' saying, Jesus seems to have targeted his address to the scribes. ii) Jesus answered the question of the scribes that was not verbalised. This seems to suggest that Jesus could have expected such a response from them. Because it was unspoken thought, not an open question, Jesus could have ignored it. In Mt 9.4, Jesus exposed the questioning of the scribes describing it as evil things, while Mark and Luke use the less severe expression of 'these things'. Jesus' characterisation of the scribes' non-verbalised questioning as evil thought overturned the accepted teaching in Judaism. Not only the scribes but the whole crowd might have sensed that Jesus said something provocative when they heard Jesus' announcement. By exposing the questioning of the scribes on the spot, Jesus showed that he was expecting such a reaction on the part of the Jewish

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[7] Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), p. 111, observes that the expression "at the door" in Mk 2.2 reminds 1.33 where the whole city was gathered together at the door and this time the number has increased than the previous occasion. Apart from the validity of analysing the phrases seemingly indicating the size of the crowd, this observation can be supported on the basis of Mk 1.45 par. where the rumour about Jesus spread broadly, thus drawing a large umber of people from all quarters. In the Lukan version of the story the religious leaders include the Pharisees as well as the scribes who came from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. The religious leaders as well as the crowd were attracted to Jesus and constituted the audience of Jesus' teaching in this episode.

[8] Gundry, *ibid.*, p. 112, argues that in this pericope the scribes appeared as antagonistic. Gundry observes two things: i) Their sitting contrasts with the activity of the four men whose faith was commended by Jesus. ii) They were portrayed as sceptical observers not actively believing in Jesus power. This interpretation seems to be the result of a misreading of the text. First, it seems ridiculous to contrast their sitting with the activity of the four men who carried the paralytic. There must have been other people who were sitting there to listen to Jesus words. As we have observed, let alone their coming from all around the country, the fact that they were sitting in the midst of Jesus' immediate audience affirms their enthusiasm to meet Jesus. Second, the scribes questioned in their hearts concerning a particular remark of Jesus. It must be viewed as natural that they responded in that way. It does not seem correct to imagine that the religious leaders came to meet Jesus with a pre-conceived idea about his identity. It will be more plausible to see them, at least on this scene, as observers rather than as opponents. So it is wrong to classify this pericope as one of the five episodes of opposition to Jesus' ministry between Mk 2.1 and Mk 3.6. While including the episode as presenting the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders, Walter Riggans, "Jesus and the Scriptures: two short notes," *Themelios* 16 (1991), p. 15, suggests that "what we have here is a record of a delegation from the Jerusalem Sanhedrin sent to investigate Jesus' life and ministry." In the historical context where Jesus' fame spread throughout Israel, the Jewish religious leaders "would rightly wish to observe him at first hand." *Ibid.* Then, we cannot argue that the Jewish religious leaders were antagonistic in this pericope.

religious leaders.[9] iii) Jesus himself disclosed that it was to let the scribes know his divine authority (v. 10): "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." When Jesus asked the scribes, "Which is easier to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'?," Jesus undoubtedly knew that forgiving sin was more difficult than healing. If Jesus announced the forgiveness of sin even though he was well aware of this fact, it was surely intentional that he did so.

c) *The Parable of the Wicked Tenants* (Mk 12.1-12 *par.*). In this pericope, Jesus disclosed his mission as the pedagogue of the Jewish religious leaders. In order to determine the nature of this mission, we need to identify the tenants, the servants and the son in the parable. The owner of the vineyard is the God of Israel and the servants sent by him designate the prophets whom the people of Israel rejected.[10] All the servants of the vineyard-owner dispatched before the son have been persecuted and killed. The tenants designate the Jewish religious leaders, who, realising that Jesus told the parable against them, attempted to arrest him. The son in the parable refers to Jesus himself.[11] If the son refers to Jesus, it reveals the essential aspect of Jesus' role and mission in his relation to the Jewish religious leaders. Jesus' mission as the final emissary of God, the vineyard-owner, is to deliver God's message to the tenants, the Jewish religious leaders. Jesus' mission was not to start a minjung revolt against the political system by overthrowing the ruling class, but to be killed by the religious leaders because of his role as God's messenger. As the prophets in the Old Testament criticised and challenged the rulers of Israel so as to correct their injustice and to restore the true worship of God, Jesus discloses that his mission as God's royal emissary is to challenge the Jewish religious leaders. It is then safe to argue that Jesus

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[9] Riggans, *ibid.*, p. 15, is wrong to observe that the religious leaders accused Jesus of blaspheming in front of all those witnesses. According to the text, they did not express their thought, though troubled in their hearts by Jesus' provocative remark.

[10] Cf. Aaron A. Milavec, "Mark's Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen as Reaffirming God's predilection for Israel," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 26:2 (Spring, 1989), p. 298. The identification of the servants with the prophets will be readily supported by Jesus' criticism of the Jews for persecuting the prophets (Mt 23.34-39).

[11] For the view that identifies the son as Jesus, see Klyne Snodgrass, *The Parable of the Wicked Tenants. An Inquiry into Parable Interpretation*. WUNT 27 (Tubingen: Mohr, 1983), pp. 80-84.

disclosed his role in his relationship with the Jewish religious leaders as that of a pedagogue of the oppressors.

I.2. Jesus' Pedagogy of the Jewish Religious Leaders

People as the Subject of Sabbath **(Mk 2.23-28/ Mt 12.1-8/ Lk 6.1-5)**[12]

a) *Audience of Jesus' Saying.* The Pharisees were the primary audience of Jesus. The pericope portrays the disciples' violation of the Sabbath law. On one Sabbath day, Jesus was passing through the grainfields with his disciples. The disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. The Pharisees who were present there did not miss the chance to accuse Jesus for letting his disciples violate the Sabbath by doing an unlawful thing on the Sabbath.[13] Jesus responded to the Pharisees with a counter-question. It was to the Pharisees that Jesus addressed his teaching (vv. 25, 27), reminding the Pharisees of the original purpose of the Sabbath ordinance and revealing himself as the lord of the Sabbath.

b) *Jesus' Intentional Violation of the Sabbath.* This violation was deliberately planned by Jesus to challenge the Pharisees.[14] First, the Pharisees were watching the movement

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[12] Though there have been various interpretations concerning the composition of this pericope, one common argument seems to be as follows: This pericope is composed of an earlier form of the conflict story and the later additions. We may find three different strands of views on its composition: i) Mk. 2. 23, 24, 27 is the most basic form of the story and the verses 25-26, 28 are later additions by the early Church. Arland J. Hultgren, "The Formation of the Sabbath Pericope in Mark 2.23-28," *JBL* 91 (1972), p. 40. ii) Mk 2.23-26 is the original story, to which 2.27-28 is added later. R. Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, 16-17; V. Taylor, *Mark*, 218. iii) Jesus saying in Mk 2.27-28 is first and 2.23-26 is composed as a framework for the saying. F.W. Beare, "The Sabbath Was Made for Man?" *JBL* 79 (1960), p. 135. It is not our main interest to deal with the problem of composition of this pericope. We will just accept the final form of the story as reflecting Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees.

[13] Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries*, p. 114, holds that the criticism of the Pharisees was not directed to Jesus, but to his disciples. Based on this reading, he argues that the material in Mk 2.23-24 has been composed by a Christian community which was confronted with criticism from the Pharisaic groups. See also R. Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, p. 16; H. Braun, *Jesus*, p. 79. But this interpretation seems to be the result of superficial reading of the text. When the Pharisees pointed out to Jesus the violation of the Sabbath by the disciples, they were actually criticising Jesus who was their leader. Jesus' answer in the form of a counter-question was given to defend himself, not his disciples.

[14] Marcus J. Borg, *Conflict, Holiness & Politics in the Teachings of Jesus* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1984), p. 148, also holds that Jesus breaking the rules by healing on the Sabbath was intentional: "Jesus' healings on the sabbath. . . were deliberate revolutionary gestures - - perhaps done

of Jesus and his disciples. Beare expressed doubt about the historicity of this presence of the Pharisees on the scene: "Are we to imagine them as out for a Sabbath stroll in the country, where they happen to spot the disciples just as they are plucking a few heads of grain?"[15] Based on Beare's observation, Hultgren argues that the appearance of the Pharisees on the scene appears to be contrived and suggests the circulation of a free-floating saying of Jesus (v. 27) prior to the composition of the story itself (vv. 23-24).[16] However, this observation and its interpretation seem to be neglecting another important aspect in the composition of the pericope. i) It is difficult to see why the story is fabricated on the basis of the fact that the presence of the Pharisees is unimaginable. It is significant to note that all three synoptic writers report the presence of the Pharisees on the scene. It seems equally unimaginable that these writers would contrive or adapt a story in which they themselves and their readers would detect instantly something unrealistic. In other words, unless the Pharisees were actually present on the scene, the writers would not have imagined to contrive or adapt a completely unrealistic story for their readers. If the presence of the Pharisees is unimaginable as Beare asserts, the purpose of creating a story to complement Jesus' original saying in v. 27 would never be achieved, for their Jewish readers would easily notice the futility of the story. Then, the person who contrived this story should be someone completely ignorant of the Pharisaic observance of the Sabbath law. ii) The Pharisees were not strolling in the country when they happened to witness the violation of the Sabbath by Jesus' disciples. The Pharisees were following Jesus from the beginning of his ministry. They were sitting in the house where Jesus healed a paralytic (Mk 2.1-11). They appeared again when Jesus was having table fellowship with the tax collectors and sinners and criticised his sharing meal with them (Mk 2.13-17). In the situation where Jesus' teaching and deed already scandalised the religious leaders, it will be most plausible reason that the Pharisees were following Jesus. In this regard, it seems noteworthy that the Pharisees' criticism of the disciples for doing what is not

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for the sake of teaching, or for demonstrating the purpose of the sabbath." So, we may say that Jesus' healing on the sabbath demonstrates his pedagogical intention.

[15] F.W Beare, *The earliest records of Jesus: a companion to the 'Synopsis of the first three Gospels' by Albert Huck* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), pp. 91-92.

[16] Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries*, p. 114.Cf. R. Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, pp. 16-17; D. Nineham, *Saint Mark*, p. 107.

lawful on the Sabbath was not against their passing through the grainfields on the Sabbath, but against their plucking heads of grain. Secondly, the violation of the Sabbath law was not initiated by the disciples. In this pericope, it is difficult to imagine that the disciples dared to violate the Sabbath observance without any form of acquiescence from Jesus. It will be more plausible to read that Jesus might have authorised his disciples to violate the Sabbath observance by plucking heads of grain. There are three reasons for making this claim. i) It must have been Jesus who led his disciples to the grainfields. It was the religious custom in the Jewish society that the disciples follow their teacher whichever road the teacher takes. Considering that it was the Sabbath day, it will be correct to say that the disciples were following Jesus as he moved. ii) However hungry the disciples might have been,[17] they would not have ventured to put their teacher into trouble by violating the Sabbath observance, the core of Jewish religion, under the constant surveillance of the religious leaders. There is no time gap between the disciples' violation (v. 23) and the accusation by the Pharisees (v. 24), which indicates that the Pharisees were watching what Jesus and his disciples did with intense interest. If it is correct to say that the Pharisees were watching every movement of Jesus and his disciples, it will also be correct to say that the disciples as well as Jesus were well aware of the fact that they were being watched. iii) In response to their accusation, Jesus referred to what David did, which reveals the fact that it was Jesus himself who authorised and so responsible for the violation. As it was David who violated the Sabbath by not only eating the bread of the Presence but giving it to those who were with him in the house of God, it was Jesus who took responsibility for violating the Sabbath.

c) *Jesus' Criticism of the Pharisees.* Jesus advocated what his disciples did: plucking heads of grain and eating them on the Sabbath day. The vindication of his disciples'

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[17] Matthew describes that the disciples were hungry, though Mark and Luke omit that expression. However, it is assumed that their plucking heads of grain was caused by their hunger. First, there is no reason for the disciples to pluck heads of grain unless they were hungry and needed something to eat. Luke records that they ate what they plucked. Second, in his response Jesus referred to what David and his companion did when they were hungry (Mk, Mt, Lk) and in need (Mk). This analogy clearly indicates that Jesus and his disciples were hungry and in need as David and his companion did.

deed is actually a criticism of the Pharisees who accused Jesus and his disciples. Jesus exposed two things by this counter-criticism.

First, Jesus exposed the false orientation of the Pharisaic religion. The Pharisees were interested only in accusing the disciples of breaking the Sabbath law, without showing any concern for the hungry state of Jesus and his disciples. It is plausible that the Pharisees knew why Jesus' disciples plucked heads of grain. They needed food because they were hungry. Jesus made it clear that to let people suffer from hunger does not square with the original will of God expressed in the Sabbath ordinance. The poor and hungry cannot share the blessing that God conferred on the day unless they have food to meet their needs. The addressees of God's commandment to observe the Sabbath day are not the poor and hungry but the rich people who have male and female slaves including a number of livestocks. He is described even to have a sojourner who stays within his gate. Then, keeping the Sabbath day plays the role to remind the rich and the powerful of their social responsibility to correct the unjust situations within their community. It is the rich and the powerful who have to keep the Sabbath ordinance, which will enable them to participate in the cause of God who sides with the poor and hungry.[18]

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[18] It is not correct to categorise Jesus and his disciples as poor. *Contra* Pallares, *A Poor Man Called Jesus*, p. 21. The context of Mk 2.23-26 does not seem to support this interpretation. Jesus and his disciples were *not* poor. First, it is true that they were not able to prepare the Sabbath meal a day in advance, nor had a place to preserve it even if it were prepared. But this does not prove their poverty. The preceding passages do not describe Jesus and his disciples as suffering from poverty and hunger. In Mk 2.13-17 Jesus called Levi the tax collector to follow him and later had a table fellowship with a number of "tax gatherers and sinners" including his own disciples. They were *eating and drinking* (v. 16). The next pericope of Mk 2.18-22 records the charge brought against Jesus' disciples for not fasting. Fasting means a voluntary refraining from food, which will only amount to an unthinkable religious luxury for the hungry and needy people. Moreover the response of Jesus employing the image of wedding feast reveals something different from the picture of poverty and hunger. According to Jesus, it is not a time to fast but to enjoy the feast. Secondly, David and his companions whose example Jesus cites to justify his disciples' violation cannot be categorised as poor and needy people. When they ate the consecrated bread, David and his people were hungry and in need. However, it is totally inappropriate to call them poor people, for their hunger and need were not permanent but only temporary inconvenience for them. David was king and he had the power to enter the house of God and violate the law. Byung-Mu Ahn, *Speaking on Minjung Theology*, p. 37, maintains that it was the hungry minjung of Jesus who plucked heads of grain. He observes that the Pharisees accused the minjung for breaking the Sabbath law, without considering the destitute reality of the minjung who had to break the Sabbath by plucking heads of grain because of hunger even though they knew it was Sabbath. In responding to the accusation of the Pharisees, Jesus sided with the hungry minjung and defended their behaviour by saying the remark (Mk 2.27). In this sense, Jesus' remark can be viewed as a declaration of minjung's right. Although it is right to argue that Jesus directed the Pharisees attention the reality of hunger and need of the people, it seems fallacious to equate Jesus disciples with the hungry minjung of Jesus for two reasons. i) As we explained above, their hungry state was

Secondly, Jesus exposed that it was the Pharisees who broke the Sabbath law. By saying that the Sabbath is made for man, Jesus justified his disciples' deed. It means that the disciples did not violate the original purpose of the Sabbath ordinance. On the contrary, as the accusation of the Pharisees is interpreted as making man subjugated to the Sabbath ordinance, Jesus criticised the Pharisees for violating the spirit of the Sabbath. It is not the disciples but the Pharisees who broke the Sabbath.

Thirdly, in this connection, it is significant to note that Jesus did not criticise the Pharisees for criticism's sake. In other words, Jesus did not intend to confront the religious leaders by merely violating their teachings on important religious practices. Jesus tried to correct the hypocritical practices of the religious leaders by criticising their violation of the spirit of Sabbath law. Thus, Jesus' deliberate violation of the Sabbath law was to bring out the true spirit or original purpose of the Sabbath ordinance which was neglected by the religious leaders.

d) *Sabbath in the Service of People.* Jesus declared in Mk 2.27 that the Sabbath was made for man, not *vice versa*. This does not nullify the observance of the Sabbath, but places the Sabbath at the service of people.[19] Jesus is criticising the false attitude concerning the Sabbath which made man a slave of the Sabbath. Here, Jesus refers to the original intention of God in instituting the Sabbath after the completion of creation.[20] The seventh day of creation was ordained by God as a day of rest that would serve men and bring them blessing.[21]

Jesus confirmed that it was *for the sake of man* that God commanded the observance of the Sabbath. To clarify this, we have to examine the social context with which the Sabbath ordinance was related. First, the observance of the Sabbath day was commanded to prevent labour exploitation. In Exod 23.12 God commanded: "Six days

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temporary. ii) More importantly, Ahn himself distinguished the disciples from the poor and the oppressed crowds who gathered around Jesus whom he falsely designated as *ochlos*. By equating the disciples who broke the Sabbath law with the hungry minjung of Jesus, he seems to refute his own argument.

[19] Pallares, *A Poor Man Called Jesus*, p. 22.

[20] J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, p. 208, maintains that this logion refers to the creation and the institution of the day of rest after the completion of God's creation. For a similar view, see Pallares, *op cit.*, p. 22.

[21] Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you shall cease *from labour* in order that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female slave, as well as your stranger, may refresh themselves" (NASB). The ox, donkey, the son of a female servant are regarded as disposable possessions of their owner and probably the most exploited work force within the household. It is for the sake of the ox, donkey and the son of a female servant as well as a stranger that God commanded to rest on the seventh day, they can rest only when their owner rests himself. It is inhumane to make them work without stopping for rest. It they are deprived of their right to rest, they become victims of the worst form of economic exploitation. God is instituting the sabbatical ordinance to secure the right of rest for the poor and oppressed people. The commandment to keep the Sabbath day in the decalogue conveys the same message (Exod 20.8-11). Because the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord, it must be spent as directed by God himself. God does not allow labour or work on the Sabbath day, for God rested on the seventh day. They have to rest on the seventh day *because* their creator God rested on that day. Although the purpose of giving this commandment is not stated explicitly, we can find a clue in v. 11: "therefore the Lord *blessed* the Sabbath day and made it holy." It is for the benefit of all those who have life on earth that God consecrated the seventh day. God's blessing of the Sabbath day is to be shared equally by all members of the household regardless of their status. Secondly, it seems to be significant to note that Sabbath observance is commanded in connection with the exodus. Deut 5.15 which is another version of the decalogue adds the following: "Remember that that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day." Keeping the Sabbath day has a close link with what God did for the people of Israel in the exodus event. The repeated call in the Old Testament for the people of Israel to remember their past predicament of slavery and the exodus event was made in relation to the prophets' indictment against their failure in worshipping God and in executing social justice. The spirit underlying the Sabbath observance commanded here is to bring justice in the community, which is spelled out in terms of allowing time to rest and refresh to all the members within the household.[22]

In the Matthean version of the episode, Matthew cites Hos 6.6 in Mt 12.7: "If you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless." Hultgren interprets this citation as an indication of Matthew's assertion that the Sabbath observance must be flexible within the framework of the traditional observance.[23] He observes that, though the Sabbath commandment must be interpreted in terms of mercy, it does not mean a relaxing of law but an enacting of the love commandment and doing good on the Sabbath.

This interpretation seems plausible but it is highly ambiguous for there still remains a question: who decides the boundary of permissible and not-permissible acts on the Sabbath? If we understand that enacting the love commandment and doing good on the Sabbath as Jesus defined and practised, it will inevitably result in the relaxing of the Sabbath law as the Pharisees understood it. The citation of Hos 6.6 should be interpreted in relation to the next proposition of Jesus: "you would not have condemned the guiltless" (v. 7b). Jesus made it clear that the Pharisees surely did not understand what the passage means, for they condemned the guiltless, i.e., the disciples who plucked heads of grain and ate them. The Pharisees had performed a sacrifice but did not have mercy. The sacrifice that they had was their faithful observance of the Sabbath law as they understood it. The mercy that they needed to have was their heart for the hungry and the needy. In the immediate context the mercy that Jesus referred to was to help the hungry. It was *mokmin* spirit that Jesus put prior to their religious zeal for Sabbath observance.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10.25-37)

a) *Understanding of the Parable in Minjung Theology.* Minjung theologians interpret the parable of the Good Samaritan to support their argument for minjung messianism.[24] Nam-Dong Suh argues that, among the priest, the Levite, the Samaritan and robbers, the person who fell among the robbers plays the role of the Christ.[25] The cry of the

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[22] The Sabbath ordinance is connected with the jubilee tradition which articulates God's command to execute social justice.

[23] Hultgren, *op cit.*, p. 112.

[24] According to the minjung messianism, the cry of the suffering minjung and their groaning is the call of the messiah. If the people respond to this cry, they will be saved. Because the minjung play the role of the messiah, the suffering *minjung* becomes the messiah.

man asking for help is the call of Christ for the passers-by. The attitude they show toward the man becomes their attitude toward the Christ. According to the way that each individual responds and reacts to the call, the true humanity within each person is either realised or suppressed. The response of each individual to the cry of the minjung determines their salvation or judgement. The purpose of Jesus' coming into the world was to play the role of the suffering person, i.e., crying for help.[26]

Ahn also refers to the parable of the good Samaritan to argue for the minjung-messianism. Rejecting the interpretation that identifies the good Samaritan with Jesus, Ahn offers his own interpretation that the central figure in the parable is not the good Samaritan, but the man who fell among the robbers.[27] He sees the deed of the good Samaritan merely as a response to the cry of the suffering man. The priest and the Levite who were confronted with the cry for help did not open themselves, whereas the good Samaritan opened himself to the cry. Ahn does not explicitly claim that Jesus is to be identified with the man who fell among the robbers, but he seems to allude to that identification in that Jesus is not the Christ who is facing the suffering minjung from God's side, but the Christ who is facing God from the mining's side.[28] In interpreting the parable, Ahn presents a confusing view by identifying Jesus with both the good Samaritan and the man fell among the robbers. Although he argues that Jesus is one with minjung, facing God from their direction, Ahn also states that Jesus existed for minjung, thus identifying him with the good Samaritan: "He identifies himself with minjung. He exists for no other than for minjung (cf. Mk 2.17)."[29] Although rejecting the messiahship of Jesus as the one who offers salvation as a manufactured product from heaven, Ahn argues that Jesus realised the salvation in his action of "transforming himself, by listening to and responding to the cry of minjung."[30] Here, Ahn identifies Jesus with the good Samaritan who responded to the cry for help.

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[25] N. Suh, "The Theological Reflection on *Han*," (in Korean) in *Studies on Minjung Theology*, p. 107

[26] N. Suh, "Speaking about the Minjung Theology," (in Korean) in *Studies on Minjung Theology*, p. 180.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Ahn, "Jesus and People (Minjung)," p. 169.

[30] *Ibid.*

Both Suh and Ahn read the parable to identify the figure who plays the role of the Christ, so they reject what they call the traditional interpretation of the parable. Drawing on the identification of the suffering man with the Christ, they proceed to develop the concepts of 'minjung salvation' and 'minjung messianism.' However, their interpretation of the parable is difficult to support. We need to pay attention to Jesus' intention in giving the parable or to the editorial intention of Luke.

b) *The Addressee of the Parable.* Jesus addressed the parable as an answer to the question of a scribe: "Who is my neighbour?" (Lk 10.29). This question came after Jesus commended the scribe for answering correctly to Jesus' question and demanded him to practise neighbourly love.[31] Luke states that the scribe asked the question to justify himself (v. 29). If it was to justify himself, it is presupposed that the scribe already knew the answer and he had been keeping the commandment to practise neighbourly love on the basis of his own definition of the neighbour. It is also noted that the question presupposes demarcation of people between the neighbour-to-be and the neighbour-not-to-be. Insofar as the neighbour is not all inclusive, it necessarily excludes certain groups of people from the category of the neighbour.[32] Jesus responded with the parable of Good Samaritan (Lk 10.30-37) *and turned the ontological description of the neighbour into the praxiological decision to become a neighbour.*

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[31] Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, p. 68, observes that the commandment to love neighbour came from Lev 19.18. The commandments of God recorded in Lev 19 were addressed to all the congregation of the people of Israel (Lev 19.1). God commands to the people of Israel not to reap the harvest of their land to the very edges of their field or gather the gleanings of their harvest (v. 9). Also God commands them not to strip their vineyard bare and not to gather the fallen grapes (v.10). It is for the poor and the alien that they should keep these commandments (v.10). Also in Lev 19. 33 they are commanded not to oppress an alien who resides with them in their land. Then it seems to be clear that the people of Israel who received these commandments were *land-owners* and thus distinguished from the poor and the alien. The neighbours whom they have to love as themselves can be equated with any of their people, for v.18 reads: "You shall *not* take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, *but* you shall love your neighbour as yourself." Here "any of your people" and "your neighbour" designate the same people. We may find at least one clue to identify the neighbours in v. 15. Lev 19.15b-c reads: "you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great; with justice you shall judge your neighbour." Here, the neighbour whom they have to love designate none other than the poor members of the Israelite community.

[32] Cf. Herman Hendricks, *The Parables of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), p. 84. He notes that the Jews accepted the fellow-Jews as neighbour and the Pharisees excluded the ordinary people (i.e., *am ha-aretz*) from their definition of "neighbour", whereas the Qumran community excluded 'the sons of darkness' who did not belong to their community.

After telling the parable, Jesus demanded the scribe to "go and do likewise" (v. 37). We may then say that the parable was addressed to the scribe alone. However, it is plausible that Jesus intended to address the parable to the Jewish leaders in general. In the parable, by contrasting the impassive behaviour of the priest and Levite with the compassionate act of the Samaritan, Jesus criticised their failure to show mercy.[33] Although Jesus gave the parable as an answer to the scribe's question, he had the Jewish leaders in mind as his intended audience.

d) *Content of the Parable.* In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus has a man falled among robbers at the centre of the story. There is given no description to enable us to identify the man's status. He was stripped, beaten and left on the road half dead. Then, a priest and a Levite happened to pass by in turn. They saw the dying man but they passed by on the other side. When a Samaritan who was journeying on the road saw the man, he came to have compassion. So, he went to the man and took necessary measures to help him. Jesus asks the lawyer, "Which of these three proved neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?" (v. 36). When the lawyer answered, "The one who showed mercy on him," Jesus demanded him to go and do likewise (v. 37).

First, we see the contrast between the compassion of the Samaritan and the religious strictness of the Jewish religious leaders. The Samaritan had compassion on the man, whereas the priest and the Levite did not. The behaviour of the priest and the Levite may be justified in the name of their religion. They would avoid contact with the naked man, who might be dead so as not to be defiled.[34] They did not have compassion on the dying man who was completely at the mercy of others. They were not interested in this fragile life. Because of their religious regulation, they left the dying person on the road and turned their backs from him. Although they saw the man, they did not see the man in the predicament and desperate situation but only saw the possibility of defiling themselves, thus voluntarily alienating themselves farther from the reality of the dying man. Secondly, Jesus commanded the lawyer to follow the example of the

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[33] It is hard to interpret that the parable was an outright attack on the Jewish religious system. Cf. Hendricks, *The Parables of Jesus*, p. 86.

[34] Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), p. 347. According to Ezek 44.25, a priest is allowed to touch only the corpse of his immediate family member for the purpose of burial.

Samaritan. Jesus' demand to do like the Samaritan is a strong indictment against the behaviour of the priest and the Levite. Actually, Jesus is discreetly accusing the practice of the religious people to keep the regulations of the law without having compassion on the life of a dying man. Jesus' command to go and do likewise implies the discarding of the religious practices in Judaism that make them turn their faces from the predicament of the people. Jesus' command also emphasises the priority of saving the people from their desperate situation over the religious observance of the law.

In the parable Jesus exposed the failure of the religious leaders in helping the needy person. By commanding the scribe to do as the Good Samaritan did, Jesus requested the *mokmin* spirit from the Jewish religious leaders as well as from the scribe himself. Jesus was admonishing the religious leaders that they should become neighbours to the people who were least likely to be counted as their neighbours and that they should value the life of a man higher than the keeping of religious regulations.

I.3. Jesus' Table Fellowship with the Jewish Religious Leaders

According to Luke's report of Jesus' table fellowship (Lk 5.29; 7.36; 10.38; 11.37; 14.1; 19.7; 22.14), the partners of Jesus' table fellowship are sharply contrasted. Jesus had table fellowship with the despised but did not exclude the honoured in society. As Joel B. Green observes, this suggests a fundamental openness on the part of Jesus to the possibility that the Pharisees will side with Jesus in fellowship and in service, i.e., in *mokmin* praxis.[35] At the same time, we will see that Jesus availed himself of the chances to teach them on important religious and social practices. Here, our concern is to examine the theological significance of Jesus' table fellowship with the Jewish leaders.

a) *Lk 11.37-41.* A Pharisee invited Jesus to table fellowship in his house. The Pharisee became surprised to see that Jesus did not wash his hands before the meal. Then Jesus took the chance to criticise the practice of the Pharisees in general: "Now you

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[35] Joel B. Green, *New Testament Theology*, p. 73. Lk 13.31 reports that 'some Pharisees' sided with Jesus over against Herod by informing Jesus of Herod's plan to kill him.

Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? So give for alms those things that are within; and see, everything will be clean for you" (vv. 39-41). Jesus showed his intentional breaking of the purity law by not washing the hands before the meal. What Jesus intended was to teach them to give alms to the poor *min*, because that was the right way to maintain religious purity.

b) *Lk 14.1-14.* Luke reports that Jesus was invited by a prominent Pharisee to share a festive meal with other religious leaders on a Sabbath. While in the house, Jesus healed a man with dropsy and asked the lawyers and the Pharisees there concerning the legitimacy of such a healing act on the Sabbath (vv. 2-4). After commenting on the conduct of the guests at the table, Jesus advised the host of the festive meal that, when he gives a luncheon or a dinner, he should invite "the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame," instead of the rich neighbours, for he will be blessed and repaid at the resurrection of the righteousness.

c) *Table Fellowship with Leader of the Pharisees.* Although Jesus was accused by the Jewish religious leaders of sharing meal with the tax-collectors and sinners, it is significant to note that Jesus was still invited by the leader of the Pharisees to a festive meal on the Sabbath. It is also significant to note that Jesus used the word *makarios* (blessed) in referring to the leader of the Pharisees. If the Jewish religious leaders would be blessed and be repaid at the resurrection by helping the poor and the needy, then we may say that they are not excluded from the kingdom of God.

d) *Healing on the Sabbath.* This is the third and last healing on the Sabbath in Luke's Gospel (cf. Lk 6.6-11; 13.10-17). In the house of the Pharisees' leader, there happened to be a man with dropsy. Jesus asked the lawyers and the Pharisees who were present about the legitimacy of healing the man on the Sabbath. They chose to remain silent.[36]

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[36] There is given no explanation about the reason why they remained silent. But it does not seem to be difficult to conjecture what caused them to keep silent. In the first Sabbath-healing episode (Lk 6.6-11 *pars.*) Jesus already criticised the traditional understanding of the Sabbath in Judaism and argued for the legitimacy of healing on the Sabbath. It may be significant that the crowd responded positively to Jesus healing on the Sabbath, which may indicate that Jesus criticism of the established religious teaching on the Sabbath observance was persuasive to the crowd. The crowd did not side with their

According to their Sabbath law, it was obviously unlawful to heal on the Sabbath, as evidenced in the synagogue ruler's remark in Lk 13.14. However, they did not answer Jesus' question. This cannot be interpreted as an indication of their consent. i) If their silence is interpreted as endorsing Jesus' question, then the lawyers and the Pharisees there would have been scandalised in that they contradicted their own teaching on the Sabbath observance. ii) There would exist no reason for them to become antagonistic toward Jesus' healing on the Sabbath. iii) Jesus did not have to argue again for the legitimacy of his healing on the Sabbath after he healed the man (v. 5). Jesus' criticism of the lawyers and the Pharisees was that they did not have the concern for a suffering human being.[37] In other words, Jesus criticised the Jewish religious leaders because they did not show concern for the marginalized and neglected people in society only to stick rigidly to their observance of the Sabbath law.

e) *Instruction for Table Fellowship.* Jesus instructs his host, leader of the Pharisees, that the people whom he should invite to dinners should not be his friends, brothers, relatives or rich neighbours but the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. Although Jesus spoke to the host, the suggestion was actually directed to the lawyers and the Pharisees present.[38] Thus, it becomes clear that what Jesus demanded from the Jewish religious leaders was the practice of the *mokmin* spirit.

I.4. Jesus' Temple Cleansing (Mk 11.15-18 pars)

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religious leaders in accusing Jesus for breaking the Sabbath, but sided with Jesus who had concern for the people and liberated the suffering people from their predicament through miraculous way. So the religious leaders had to remain silent, for their religious logic did not obtain support from the crowd.

[37] Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke (X-XXIV)*, p. 1040, holds that Jesus directed his criticism against "his contemporaries for their lack of concern for a fellow human being." But this interpretation is not correct for two reasons. First, it was not his contemporaries but the lawyers and the Pharisees, i.e., the Jewish religious leaders that Jesus was criticising in this pericope. Second, it was not the fellow human beings in general to whom the religious leaders should show concern. In this episode, as in other stories of Sabbath healing, the people whom Jesus showed particular concern even by breaking the traditional concept of keeping the Sabbath was a man who was suffering from a disease, i.e., a sick man. The sick men in the Jewish society were not regarded as legitimate members of the community, but were marginalized.

[38] Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke*, p. 1047, suggests that the instruction has something to do with the Christian disciple: "the invitation of such persons by the Christian disciple will reveal his concern to relieve the need of fellow human beings." However, according to the immediate context, it was to the Jewish religious leaders that Jesus gave the instruction.

Interpretation of Jesus' Temple Cleansing in Minjung Theology

Byung-Mu Ahn suggests that Jesus' temple cleansing should be understood against the historical situation and argues that it was the most dramatic expression of the minjung liberation movement.[39] He notes that there are two strands of interpretation of the event among scholars: Jesus attempted to restore the original function of the temple or Jesus' act was revolutionary in that it rejected the temple system itself.[40] Ahn accepts only the first interpretation that Jesus' temple cleansing was the culmination of the minjung movement in that it revolted against the Jerusalem temple system and the Roman colonial power behind the system. His argument is supported as follows.

First, Ahn regards the report of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as a significant clue to interpreting the meaning of the subsequent acts of Jesus in the Jerusalem temple. Ahn thinks that Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was neither accidental nor customary. Jesus came to Jerusalem not to observe the annual Passover festival but to confront the Jerusalem system. According to Ahn, other minjung movements like Zealots and Essenes, let alone the Galilean minjung, had anti-Jerusalem sentiment and targeted primarily the Jerusalem system. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem should therefore be understood in the same line with those minjung movements.[41] Ahn supports his argument by referring to three biblical passages which allude to the purpose of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. i) Mk 10.32: "They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed and those who followed were afraid." ii) Mk 10.42: "Jesus called them and said to them, You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognise as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them." This saying is interpreted as Jesus' criticism of the Gentile (particularly Roman) ruling system.[42] iii) Mk 12.37: "David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?" Ahn interprets this saying as the negation of the messianic expectation embraced by the rulers in Jerusalem who identified the Messiah with the

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[39] B. Ahn, "Jesus' Confrontation with the Temple System in Jerusalem," in *Development of Minjung theology in the 1980s*, p. 366.

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 260.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

son of David.[43] So, Jesus did not accept that the restoration of the Davidic kingdom and the restoration of the reign of God are one and the same thing.[44] Ahn argues that these three passages are important in suggesting Jesus' intentional entry into Jerusalem.

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is the conclusion of all his activities in Galilee.[45] During his ministry in Galilee, Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God which envisaged the realisation of the reign of God, i.e., the mono-Yahwehism. The Jerusalem temple system, on the contrary, was the centre of the anti-Yahweh forces in Palestine. Jesus was well aware of the fact that the Jerusalem temple system was the cause of the poverty and the miserable life of the Galilean minjung. Without destroying the temple system there would be no minjung liberation to be fulfilled by Jesus. In the end, Jesus envisioned the restoration of the egalitarian ancient tribal community before the time of David. In this regard, the temple cleansing was an expression of Jesus' determination to terminate the temple system. Jesus' proclamation that "not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down" (Mk 13.2) coincides with Jesus' intention to terminate the temple system.

Secondly, Ahn has a negative concept of the temple. Based on Jesus' quotation from Isa 56.7b, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations" (Mk 11:17a), Ahn asserts that Jesus had a different concept of the temple from that of traditional Judaism, for in Judaism the temple was perceived to be the place for sacrifice. Ahn argues that Mark's editorial intention is to emphasise the fact that, as the temple became the den of robbers, it should be destroyed.[46] As it was alluded to in the story of the withered fig tree, the Jerusalem temple system should be eradicated. Mark's interpretation of Jesus' temple cleansing is that Jesus did not intend the

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[43] *Ibid.*

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 518.

[45] Ahn, "The Jerusalem Temple System and Jesus' Confrontation," p. 526.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 525. Ahn, *Jesus of Galilee*, pp. 260-261, argues: "If Jesus cleansed the temple simply because the temple was turned into a den of robbers, Jesus' act in the temple was an expression of a religious passion to reform the religious system. If it was so, those who were objected by such an act must have been the religious leaders who enjoyed privileges within the Jewish religion. In this regard, the report that the high priests and the scribes planned to kill Jesus was quite natural. But, was the act of cleansing the temple serious enough to make the Jewish religious leaders plot to kill Jesus? They must have perceived Jesus' act in the temple as a threat to the existing temple system."

reformation of the temple system but its termination.[47] Ahn also argues that it is Mark's editorial intention to connect the parable of the wicked tenants with Jesus' temple cleansing.[48] The central message of the parable should be found in the destruction and replacement of the tenants who killed the son of the owner of vineyard (Mk 12.9).[49] Thirdly, according to Ahn, Mark contrasts the two opposing groups, i.e., one group consisting of Jesus and the minjung and the other group of people in political power in the series of events that occurred after Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.[50] In sharply contrasting the two groups, Mark intended to emphasise that Jesus' death was due to his challenge and negation of the temple system.[51] Forthly, Ahn conjectures that it was not Jesus alone but the Galilean minjung who revolted against the system through the act of temple cleansing.[52] He bases his argument on the observation that it is Mark's consistent intention not to separate Jesus from the minjung even in his death and resurrection.[53] Fifthly, Jesus' act of temple cleansing was an indirect challenge to the Roman colonial power. The attempt to destroy the temple system constituted an indirect contest against Roman imperialism that dominated Palestine society through the Jerusalem temple.[54]

In summing up, Ahn argues that Jesus attempted to terminate the Jerusalem temple system through his act of temple cleansing, for the Jerusalem temple system provided ruling ideology that supported and justified the ruling class of Palestine society. The Palestine minjung were subjected to the oppression and exploitation of the ruling class, for the temple system operated as the anti-Yahweh forces intervening between God and his people, monopolising the power that rightfully belonged to God.[55] What Jesus

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[47] *Ibid.*, "The Jerusalem Temple System and Jesus' Confrontation," p. 525.

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 529.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 526.

attempted through his act of temple cleansing was to restore God's sovereignty by confronting and destroying the anti-Yahweh forces and to liberate God's people, i.e., the Galilean minjung who responded to Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God.[56]

Problem with Ahn's Interpretation of Jesus' Temple Cleansing

a) *Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.* It is correct to observe that Jesus came to Jerusalem with a definite purpose, though the pericope itself does not offer any direct clue. The argument that Jesus came up to Jerusalem to revolt against the Jerusalem temple system with the minjung seems to be highly speculative. In Mk 10.32, we are not given any clue to connect the scene with Jesus' determination in choosing Jerusalem as the place for his final minjung revolt. Although we may admit that Jesus criticised the Gentile rulers in Mk 10.42, it is not possible to refer to this verse in support of the argument that Jesus came up to Jerusalem for minjung revolt. By saying "among the Gentiles" Jesus made it clear that the negative practices of the Gentile rulers were related to the Gentile world. According to this saying, the people who are oppressed by the Gentile rulers are not the Galilean minjung, but the Gentiles. Jesus was saying this to his disciples not in the sense that they should overthrow such political system but in the sense that such a pattern should not be repeated in the Jesus community.

It is strange that Ahn does not refer to Mark's report about Jesus' statement that revealed his purpose of coming up to Jerusalem. Ahn emphasises that the reference to Jerusalem in Mk 11.15a was Mark's editorial arrangement to highlight Jesus' purposeful entry into Jerusalem.[57] If this is so, it will be fair to say that we need to pay due attention to Mark's editorial arrangement and report concerning the geographical reference. According to Mark, Jesus predicted his death and resurrection three times (Mk 8.31; Mk 9.31; Mk 10.33-34). In Mk 10.33, Jesus explicitly connects his death and resurrection with his entry into Jerusalem, indicating that the purpose of his coming up to Jerusalem was to suffer death at the hands of the Jewish religious leaders and to rise again in three days. Mark refers to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem again in Mk 11.27. It is difficult to say that the consistent Markan editorial intention was to present

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[55] *Ibid.*, p. 527.

[56] *Ibid.*

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 515.

the minjung revolt, for we cannot find any such movement in the subsequent encounters between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

b) *Jesus' concept of the Temple.* Ahn argues that Jesus had a different concept of the temple and thus attempted to destroy the existing system through minjung revolt. However, the biblical data does not seem to support Ahn's argument. i) Although Ahn asserts that Jesus' quotation of Isa 56.7a in Mk 11.17a presents a different perception of the temple from that in the traditional Judaism in that it does not reflect the aspect of sacrifice as the function of the temple, Isa 56.7 describes the temple *both* as the place for prayer *and* as the place for sacrifice. At any rate, Jesus' saying about the temple as the house of prayer reflects authentic Jewish understanding of the temple. ii) When Jesus criticised the Jewish religious leaders for making the temple into a den of robbers, he was not negating the temple *itself* but rebuking the Jewish religious leaders. In fact, in the episode itself we do not find any hint that suggests Jesus' negative attitude toward the temple. Although what Jesus said about the temple was one of the charges brought against him at the Sanhedrin trial, it seems strange that his provocative act of disturbing the temple practices was never mentioned. If the Jewish religious leaders decided to kill Jesus after his act of temple cleansing because it constituted a serious threat to the existing temple system, it would have been quite natural for the accusers to refer to Jesus' temple cleansing. But, his actual act of temple cleansing which should have been conceived as much more serious than his verbal criticism, was not brought up in the process of the trial. As Ahn observes, we can identify Jesus' concept of the temple in his teaching in v. 17. Here, Jesus disclosed his understanding of the temple as a house of prayer for all the nations. It becomes clear that Jesus was attacking not the temple system *per se* but the Jewish leaders who made the temple which should become a house of prayer into a den of robbers and the commercial practices of selling and buying the material for sacrifice in the temple.[58]

c) *Jesus' Act as the Minjung's Act.* Ahn argues that in the passion story Mark contrasts Jesus and the minjung on one side and the ruling class on the other side. He

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[58] Also see Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, p. 131. He observes that it was 'the leaders of the temple establishment, the scribes, the high priests, and the elders' that Jesus rejected.

describes the temple cleansing as a minjung revolt, which brought the death sentence on Jesus, for the act was perceived to be a threat to the Roman colonial order. However, we also find that this argument is highly speculative and difficult to support with biblical evidence. 1) Mark does not report the collective movement of the minjung against the ruling class but only the single movement of Jesus. There is no hint given in Mark's report of Jesus' temple cleansing that the crowd joined Jesus in disturbing the court of the Gentiles.[59] 2) What Jesus did in the temple was not considered to be a sufficient threat in itself to the temple system. If it was conceived to be a minjung revolt, it becomes difficult to explain why there was no immediate response on the part of the temple authorities or the Roman military forces. Mark does not describe any kind of violent confrontations between the two sides. Mark reports that Jesus entered Jerusalem the next day without meeting any kind of opposition from the temple authorities. The other observation that supports our argument that Jesus' act of temple cleansing was not a minjung revolt is that the Jewish religious leaders came to Jesus, after all the tumult of the previous day, simply to inquire about the source of his authority to perform such an act in the temple. If they considered Jesus' act of temple cleansing as minjung revolt that threatened the existing temple system, it is hardly imaginable for them to come to Jesus simply to interrogate the source of his authority.

The Significance of Jesus' Temple Cleansing

Some scholars rightly argue that the story of Jesus' temple cleansing has a didactic function in the Gospels.[60] By the act of temple cleansing, Jesus stopped the trade in the temple. This was an symbolic act in that it delivered a clear message to the Jewish religious leaders that the abuse of the temple system to exploit the people must be stopped.

Regardless of the question whether Mk 11.17 reflects the original saying of Jesus or Markan edition,[61] we do not fail to find the significance of Jesus' act of temple

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[59] *Contra* Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, pp. 332-334. He asserts that Jesus could not have succeeded in driving out the traders single-handedly, but must have been assisted by the crowds. He also argues that the lack of response on the part of the temple police suggests that the mob was too large to control. The hypothesis that the description of Jesus' temple cleansing reflects Markan editorial intention to present Christianity as a non-revolutionary movement is simply speculative.

[60] See Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, p. 130; Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, p. 36.

cleansing in that biblical quotation. After his act of cleansing the temple, Jesus supported his act by teaching the crowd who gathered around him. By quoting Jer 7.11, Jesus criticised those who were trading in the temple as robbers. It is clear that Jesus directed his criticism to the Jewish leaders whom he explicitly designated as robbers. By using the term 'robbers' Jesus disclosed how he perceived the religious practices in the temple and the Jewish leaders who were behind these practices.

The whole business of selling and buying was part of the established religious system sanctioned by the religious leaders who were exploiting and thriving upon that system.[62] Jesus not only demonstrated that the system was unjust but confirmed his act by his words that designated the Jewish leaders behind the system as "robbers". What Jesus demonstrated was a dramatic criticism of the economic exploitation that had been justified in the name of religion and taken for granted by the people.

Jesus gave the parable of the wicked tenants as an explanation about his act of temple cleansing, for it was given after the interrogation of the Jewish religious leaders about its legitimacy. Jesus' pedagogical intention is also disclosed in the parable itself, so we need to explain the nature of the son's mission as well as that of the prophets as described in the parable.

It is striking to observe that the owner kept sending his slaves to the tenants in spite of their brutal treatment of his emissaries. The first slave sent by the owner was beaten

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[61] Ahn, "The Jerusalem Temple System and Jesus' Confrontation," p. 515, analyses the pericope as follows: V.15a - Markan editorial insertion; v. 15bc - The original event; v. 16 - Mark's special source; v. 17a - Markan edition; v. 17b - It is not certain whether it reflects Jesus' authentic saying or Markan edition; v. 18 - Mark's interpretation of Jesus' act. In the story of Jesus' temple cleansing, Ahn accepts v. 15bc (possibly including v. 16) as reflecting the original event. Based on this analysis, Ahn proposes to find the significance of Jesus' act of temple cleansing in the broader context of Mark's editorial intention, so he attempts to identify Mark's editorial intention.

Seyoon Kim also analyses the pericope in a similar way. He argues that the records of the episode in the Synoptic gospel do not provide any satisfactory clue to explain the meaning of Jesus' act of temple cleansing. Though he admits the possibility to find a clue for the meaning of Jesus' act in his teaching given after the act (Mk 11.17), he dismisses v. 17 from his discussion, accepting the views of the critical scholars who question its authenticity and categorise it as a Markan edition. Following the critical scholars, he does not take even Mk 11.16 as an authentic description of Jesus' act, thus accepting only Mk 11.15 as the only authentic data about Jesus' temple act. So, according to Kim, we have only Jesus' act of driving those who sell and buy the animals for sacrifice from the court of the Gentiles, overturning the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sell doves. After this redactional adjustment, Kim argues that the basic data in v. 15 describing Jesus' two acts is not sufficient to decide the meaning of Jesus' act or what Jesus intended to disclose through his act, so he suggests to look for a broader context. S. Kim, "Jesus and the Temple," (in Korean) *Jesus and Paul,* p. 152.

[62] For a detailed explanation of the exploitation by the Jerusalem temple system, see Ahn, *op. cit.*, pp. 519-524.

and sent back empty-handed (Mk 12.3). The second one was also beaten over the head and insulted (v. 4). The third one was killed (v. 5a). Regardless of the injustice of the tenants, the owner sent many others hoping that they would respond to his request to give his share of the produce of the vineyard. He finally decides to send his beloved son, expecting that they would respect to his son. But the tenants refused to comply to the consistent request of the owner of the vineyard, thus killing his son. Our question is: Why did the owner of the vineyard keep sending his slaves, even his son, to the tenants? Jesus explains that it was to collect his share of the produce of the vineyard that the owner of the vineyard kept sending his slaves and his son. Then, to grasp the nature of Jesus' mission, we need to clarify the fruit that the owner demanded so consistently.

Jesus first refers to a man who "planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watchtower" (Mk 12.1). As we have shown in Chapter Four, the vineyard symbolises Israel.[63] This explicit quotation of Isaiah 5.1-2 reflects the familiar imagery from the Old Testament and Jewish tradition that symbolises what God did for the people of Israel (cf. also Ps 80.8-9).[64] This work of God as the farmer then indicates the liberation of Israel from the bondage of Egypt and the creation of the new nation.

He leased the vineyard to the tenants who were supposed to pay the farmer's share of the fruit. This obligation of the tenants can be interpreted as the covenant obligation of the people of Israel. What was the fruit of the vineyard that the owner requested consistently in spite of such losses of life? As we have discussed, the fruit that God requested from Israel the vine was none other than the fulfilment of the covenant obligations, which were expressed as establishing justice and righteousness.[65] The

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[63] In Judaism the imagery of vineyard symbolises Israelite community. Cf. Isa 3.13-15; 5.1-30; 27.2-6; Jer 2.21; 8.13; 12.10; Ezek 15.1-8; 17.1-10; 19.10-14; Hos 10.1; Amos 9.13-15; Nah 2.2; Ps 79.9-19.

[64] Cf. Leopold Sabourin, *The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning* (New York: Alba House, 1970), p. 306. Ps 80, which is considered as a community lament in which the congregation call upon the Lord to come and save them, recalls the history of salvation that God accomplished in the history of Israel by employing the vineyard imagery: You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land (vv. 8-9). E. G. Briggs, *The Book of Psalms* ICC vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960), p. 205, notes that the verb plant is constantly used in the Old Testament to refer to the establishment of Israel in the Holy Land, even when the image of a tree or a vine is not thought of.

concrete form of justice and righteousness that God requires of the house of Israel is to care for the poor, the hungry, the widow, the orphan, the oppressed, the troubled and the afflicted.[66] The Old Testament prophets criticised rulers of Israel as well as the people for neglecting to fulfil their covenant obligations to establish social justice and to restore true worship of God, which must be manifested in the care of the poor and the oppressed.[67] Jesus' mission as God's royal son is therefore continuous with the mission of the prophets. Jesus' mission is to deliver the same message to the Jewish religious leaders to establish justice in the society and to restore the true worship of God. Thus, it becomes clear that what Jesus wanted to demonstrate through his act of temple cleansing was to criticise the lack of *mokmin* spirit on the part of the Jewish leaders.

II. Jesus and the Rich

It is also our contention that, regardless of the response of the rich, Jesus acted as the pedagogue of the rich in Jewish society in that he attempted to teach them to adopt *mokmin* praxis.

II.1. Jesus as the Pedagogue of the Rich

Jesus' Announcement of Good News to the Poor (Lk 4.18-22).

In attempting to describe Jesus as the pedagogue of the rich, we need to examine the aspect of Jesus' ministry concerning the poor. Minjung theologians assert that Jesus' ministry of preaching the good news to the poor shows the most decisive feature of his

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[65] Isa 5.7 also describes the covenant obligations of the people of Israel as establishing justice and righteousness: "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!"

[66] Birch, *Let Justice Roll Down*, p. 156.

[67] The demand to do justice and to liberate the poor and the oppressed was the consistent message of the Old Testament prophets directed to the leaders of Israel, for it was the fulfilment of their covenant obligations as God's legitimate people. The failure of the Jewish leaders is well expressed in the indictment of the prophet Isaiah: "The Lord rises to argue his case; he stands to judge the people. The Lord enters into judgement with the elders and princes of his people: It is you who have devoured the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?" (Isa 3.13-15). The elders and princes of Israel devoured the vineyard of God, which was described in terms of economic exploitation of the poor. God comes forward to judge them. The crime of the leaders of Israel was their failure to judge with justice and defend the rights of the needy (cf. Jer 5.28).

ministry. Jeremias holds that the phrase *ptochoi euangelizontai* expresses the heart of Jesus' proclamation.[68] Commenting on the Beatitudes, Jeremias even argues that the reign of God belongs to the poor alone.[69] It is necessary for us, then, to investigate the biblical context in which Jesus announced that *ptochoi euangelizontai.*

Scholars have described Lk 4.18-22 as the manifesto of Jesus' mission to the poor.[70] Our concern here is to examine the immediate context to determine the nature of Jesus' ministry, for this pericope is the first scene of Jesus' public ministry.[71] Most scholars focus on the *content* of Jesus' message in this pericope, but what we need to identify is the *audience* of Jesus' announcement of *ptochoi euangelizontai*. Luke reports that it was in the synagogue that Jesus announced his ministry citing Isa 61.2: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor." The people who were present in the synagogue on the Sabbath were the Jewish religious leaders[72] and the legitimate members of Israel. What we observe here is that Jesus announced "good news to the poor" in the synagogue to the Jewish religious leaders and the non-poor legitimate members of Israel.[73] In Lk 4.21 ("Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."), Jesus made it clear that he announced the fulfilment of what he quoted from Isaiah to the people present in the synagogue. If this is so, we may interpret that Jesus' announcement of his ministry to the Jewish religious leaders and the non-poor legitimate members of Israel is good news for the poor.

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[68] Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, p. 109.

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

[70] Walter E. Pilgrim, *Good News to the Poor. Wealth and Poverty in Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Ausburg Publishing House, 1981), p. 64. Jesus' homily at the synagogue in Nazareth is considered by scholars as the key to understanding his ministry. Cf. J. Massyngbaerde Ford, "Reconciliation and Forgiveness in Luke's Gospel," in *Political Issues in Luke-Acts*, p. 80; Green, *New testament Theology*, p. 76

[71] Green, *New Testament Theology*, p. 76.

[72] Jesus accused the Pharisees of preferring the seat of honour in the synagogue (Mt 23.6; Lk 11.43).

[73] Cf. Julio de Santa Ana, *Good News to the Poor. The Challenge of the Poor in the History of the Church* (Lausanne: Imprimerie La Concorde, 1977), p. 13, who fails to observe that Jesus' mission was addressed to the non-poor members of the Jewish community.

***The Story of Zacchaeus* (Lk 19.1-10)**

Pilgrim maintains that this pericope is not only the most important Lukan text on the subject of the right use of possessions but also the paradigm *par excellence* for wealthy Christians in his community.[74] He also suggests that, as the story is placed towards the end of Jesus' public ministry, it represents the Lukan answer to the tough question, "Can the rich be saved?"[75] If this is so, there should be no question about Jesus' concern for the rich. However, to support our contention for Jesus' ministry as the pedagogue of the rich, we need to examine the story in more detail.

We observe two things in the story: Jesus' initiative in approaching Zacchaeus and Zacchaeus' siding with Jesus in *mokmin* praxis by helping the poor. First, Luke describes that Zacchaeus desired to meet Jesus. In the social context where Jesus was accused of associating with the tax collectors and sinners, it could have been possible for Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector, to expect an opportunity for fellowship with Jesus when he entered Jericho. The fact that Zacchaeus tried to see Jesus strongly suggests that Zacchaeus thought that Jesus would not reject even an exploiter like him. Secondly, Jesus approached Zacchaeus, a very rich man, to offer fellowship with him. By telling Zacchaeus his intention to stay at his house, Jesus clearly showed his concern for the rich, though socially despised. Thirdly, Zacchaeus confessed to Jesus that he would give half of his possessions to the poor. This immediate response of Zacchaeus indicates that Zacchaeus was well aware of the nature of Jesus' ministry. In other words, Zacchaeus must have heard that Jesus' ministry was characterised by his solidarity with the poor *min* of the Jewish community and by his pedagogy of the rich to side with him. Fourthly, as it did not take much time for Zacchaeus to confess his intention to side with Jesus in helping the poor, likewise it did not take much for Jesus to announce salvation for Zacchaeus: "Today salvation has come to this house because he too is a son of Abraham" (v. 9). Jesus' announcement of salvation affirms that the rich are not permanently excluded from the kingdom of God just because that they are rich. What Jesus discloses here is that salvation is available even for the rich insofar as the rich respond to Jesus' teaching and show the *mokmin* praxis.

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[74] Pilgrim, *Good News to the Poor*, p. 129.

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

II. 2. The Content of Jesus' Pedagogy of the Rich

As Jesus did not reject the rich, but challenged them to follow the path of justice by siding with him, it is necessary to examine the content of Jesus' pedagogy of the rich.

The Rich Young Man (Mt 19.16-30/ Mk 10.17-27/ Lk 18.18-30)

Mk 10.17-22 reports Jesus' encounter and dialogue with a rich young man[76] on his journey, and in vv. 23-27, Jesus' teaching on the difficulty for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God. A rich young man comes to Jesus and asks him a question about the way to gain eternal life. His purpose in raising that question in public can be viewed as his deliberate attempt to enhance his honour and merit. But Jesus does not endorse the rich young man's intention.[77] What we have to bear in mind is that, as the rich young man's question was made in public, Jesus' response to the man also was in public. Jesus reminds him the commandments of the second part of the decalogue. The rich young man confidently replies that he had kept all of them "from his youth". Recognising the person's reply as true, Jesus points out that the man lacks one thing to have eternal life and asks him to sell all his possessions and to follow Jesus. It is a definite challenge to the rich man to practise *mokmin* spirit and to side with Jesus by following him. The person became shocked and went away grieving because of his many possessions. Faced with the unexpected challenge from Jesus, the rich young ruler chooses wealth instead of eternal life which can be obtained by acting upon Jesus' instruction. After this brief encounter and dialogue, Jesus turns to his disciples and teaches them about the impossibility for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. Even the disciples became embarrassed by Jesus' emphasis on that impossibility and wonder who could be saved. Jesus reveals that salvation, which is impossible with man, is

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[76] The inquirer is referred to as 'a man' in Mk 10.17, as 'a ruler' in Lk 18.18, and as 'the young man' in Mt 19.22. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, p. 299, explains that the phrase 'from my youth' is omitted from the person's remark in Matthew because he was a young man. However, even though he was a young man he could have used that expression. Seeing that he had large possessions at his own disposal, he seems to have been a person mature enough to have a legal transactions, which makes his use of the expression plausible.

[77] His address to Jesus as 'Good Teacher' is a positive challenge which is expecting a similar compliment in return. Jesus refuses to accept that compliment by correcting him about the use of the word 'Good'.

possible only with God, thus opening the possibility for the rich to be saved by God.[78] We will explore the story in more detail to determine how Jesus' pedagogical intention towards the rich is disclosed.

a) *Jesus' Radical Demand: Liberation from Wealth.* Jesus repeatedly emphasises the difficulty for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. This is a unique instance where Jesus repeats the same saying three times.[79] The response of Jesus' disciples when he first refers to the difficulty was perplexion. This response may be interpreted as showing *either* that Jesus' disciples notice in Jesus' saying something different from what they have thought before *or* that Jesus' harsh saying can be applied even to them. Jesus repeats the same remark using a strong imagery of camel entering the eye of a needle. It is an extremely absurd picture to have the biggest known animal in Palestine in those days entering an eye of a needle that is the smallest aperture.[80] The use of this imagery conveys the idea of impossibility for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.[81] The disciples become astounded again and said, "Who then can be saved?" It suggests that Jesus' disciples understood that it would be difficult even for them to be saved by the criterion that Jesus referred to.[82]

Why is it difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of God? Is it because the kingdom of God is meant only for the *proletariat*? Or, is it because wealth *per se* is not compatible with the kingdom of God? We have to read Jesus harsh indictment against

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[78] I. H. Marshall, *Commentary on Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 686.

[79] Pallares, *A Poor Man Called Jesus*, p. 67.

[80] Hooker, *The Gospel according to St Mark*, p. 243.

[81] A.E.J. Rawlinson, *St Mark* (London: Methuen & Co., 1925), p. 141.

[82] Sharon H. Ringe, *Jesus, Liberation, and the Biblical Jubilee* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 61, states that Peter's saying is to contrast himself and the others who left everything and followed Jesus with the rich man who was unable to do so. However, as we read that Jesus' demand on the rich man was not to 'leave' his home and land, but to sell them and give the money to the poor, we cannot say that Peter was contrasting himself and his colleagues with the rich man. On the contrary, the response of the disciples in v.28 seems to suggest their identification with the rich man. They probably thought that the same principle of selling all the possessions and giving them to the poor was to be applied even to them, which caused much concern among them. They did not sell their possessions and did not give them to the poor, but just left them behind. They could have wondered if Jesus was introducing a new condition to be accepted into the kingdom of God. So Peter had to reaffirm their status in the kingdom of God, because they simply responded to Jesus' command to follow which did not include the same demand as that on the rich man.

the rich in relation to the rich young man, because Jesus' teaching is prompted by his encounter with this person.

Jesus' indictment seems to be applied to the rich in general. However, it does not teach the incompatibility of wealth and the kingdom of God.[83] Jesus' demand does not mean that the rich has to dispose his possessions because it is the root of the problem. At the same time, there is no reference to the wicked way in which the rich man accumulated his wealth.[84] After Jesus enumerates the commands of the second part of the decalogue, the rich man responds confidently that he has kept them all from his youth, which seem to prove the observation that the wealth that he acquired was not through exploitation of others.[85] Jesus does not dispute the man's claim.[86] However, Jesus points out that the man still lacks one thing to be able to inherit eternal life. This is not one final step or a little bit more, but the one thing that is absolutely necessary.[87] The commandments in the decalogue seem to be enumerated as a foil to place more weight on the next demand of Jesus. That is, by enumerating the demands of the decalogue, Jesus emphasises the ineffectiveness of keeping all those commandments in obtaining eternal life. Insofar as he lacks one thing, his keeping all those commandments does not guarantee him eternal life. It is probable that, by enumerating

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[83] Pallares, *A Poor Man Called Jesus*, p. 66, holds that "wealth is not only a serious difficulty, it is an insuperable one as far as entering the kingdom of God is concerned." But, Jesus commands the rich man to sell his possessions and give it to the poor. When wealth *per se* becomes a hindrance in entering the kingdom of God, why then did Jesus demand the rich to give it to the poor? Is it to help the poor or to make them unable to enter the kingdom of God? The intention of Jesus in saying this becomes ambiguous. Jeremias is probably correct to observe that nowhere in the New Testament does Jesus express the view that wealth *per se* is to be condemned as entailing hell and poverty paradise. Cf. Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 184-85.

[84] It is generally accepted that Jesus' attitude toward the rich young man was sympathetic. Marshall, *Commentary on Luke*, p. 684.

[85] Jesus inserts "you shall not defraud" instead of the original clause, "you shall not covet". Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, p. 553, interprets this replacement of the prohibition of coveting by that of defrauding as Jesus scheme to leave room for the rich man to respond affirmatively to the enumerated commandments. He further asserts that Jesus did not include the prohibition of coveting only to make it conspicuous and to emphasise its applicability to the rich man himself. However, it will be more appropriate to read the insertion of the clause you shall not defraud as serving to check if there is any form of exploitation of others by which his riches are accumulated. Cf. J.A. Draper, "'Go sell all that you have. . .' (Mark 10.17-30)," *JourTheoSAfric* 79 (1992), pp. 63-69.

[86] Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, p. 300.

[87] Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, p. 104.

the commandments, Jesus intends to disclose the man's false confidence that eternal life is secured by keeping the commandments of the law. This may have the effect of overturning what people normally expected or were taught to expect. By making it clear that keeping all the commandments of the law is not enough to secure eternal life, Jesus emphasises that the demand to sell his possessions and give them to the poor is not something optional. There is no such commandment of God that requires the selling of everything that one possesses and giving them to the poor.

Jesus demanded the man to sell all his possessions. It is difficult to call this as 'charity' that will enable one to inherit eternal life,[88] for selling and giving all one's possessions to others go beyond the act of charity. Selling all his wealth and giving it to the poor is not a matter of almsgiving, but implies his giving-up of social status and privileges. It means a radical re-orientation of the rich person's life, terminating the life-style he has been enjoying up to that point. The loss of wealth will be accompanied with the loss of honour and social standing. It also means that he will be separated from the social groups that he used to belong to and the personal associations that he used to maintain. This might have been a painfully difficult obstacle for the rich man to overcome. If what Jesus demanded from the rich young man was to help a few poor people and liberate them from their predicament, the man might have readily accepted Jesus' demand without grieving that much. Although the rich man have sincere interest in acquiring eternal life, the demand to sell all his possessions is almost impossible to comply with, unless he is liberated from the grip of the value system of his society. Then, we may say that the impossibility of the rich man to enter the Kingdom of God actually lies in the difficulty for the rich man to choose the non-rich status. Only if the rich man can opt for the non-rich status will it become possible for him to enter the Kingdom of God. Jesus made it clear that this radical and voluntary change of life-style will be almost impossible to be self-activated on the part of the rich, but God can initiate that and emancipate the rich from the grip of the social value system. Thus, the Kingdom of God is related not only to the liberation of the poor from their poverty but the liberation of the rich from their wealth.

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[88] *Contra* Gundry, *Mark*, p. 554.

b) *Re-orienting Life: Siding with Jesus.* Jesus specified the poor as recipient of the rich man's money.[89] Jesus' demand to give the money "to the poor" seems to imply that wealth is not something to be condemned in itself, for, if it is the disposal of wealth itself that matters, that would be difficult for us to explain why Jesus ordered the rich to give such condemnable wealth to the poor. The point that Jesus is demanding here is not the renunciation of possessions, but the act of giving them to the poor. The significant fact we need to observe here is that, by helping the poor to be liberated from their poverty, the rich are actually helping themselves. Jesus told the rich man that, by selling all his possessions and giving them to the poor, he is laying up treasures in heaven. By helping the poor get out of their poverty, the rich are siding with God and qualified to inherit eternal life.

Jesus demanded the rich man to come empty-handed and follow him. What Jesus demanded the rich man was not simply to make a commitment to accept him, but to follow him.[90] This is a radical way to side with Jesus, for it implies to leave or break away from the kinship unit.[91] This seems to be a sacrifice beyond measure, for he has to abandon his ties not only with his family but with the entire social network of which he had been a part.[92]

Here, Jesus did not intend a mere reversal of material status. It is not a change of status between the rich and the poor, i.e., to make the rich poor and *vice versa*. Insofar

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[89] The poor people are distinguished from most peasants and artisans in that peasants and artisans were able to work and were not called as far as they had what was sufficient, though not rich. The term used to designate the manual labours is *penes*. Gildas Hamel writes that the worker "was forced to work to live and had to receive some form of wage and to sell; the craftsman was dependent on others' goodwill. . . .The *penetes* were all those people who needed to work in shops or in the fields and were consequently without the leisure characteristic of the rich gentry, who were free to give their time to politics, education, and war." Hamel Gilda, *Poverty and charity in Roman Palestine first three centuries C.E.* (Berkeley, Oxford: University of California Press,1990), pp. 168-169. The term designate destitute beggars, not the manual workers nor the general peasant audience of have-nots. For the same view, see J. Neyrey, "Loss of Wealth, Loss of Family and Loss of Honour: The Cultural Context of the Original Makarisms in Q," in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context*, p. 147; P. F. Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 180, 181.

[90] In Judaism, 'following' refers to the way students follow their teacher of law, walking behind him at a respectful distance as his disciples. Cf. Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, p. 47. Here, to follow Jesus involves not only a specific kind of adherence to Jesus and his cause but accompanying him on the road.

[91] Malina and Rohrbauch, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 123.

[92] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

as he accepts the call to follow Jesus, he is expected to lead the same way of life as Jesus had led. This call does not mean to become poor like Jesus, for as we examined above, Jesus cannot be categorised as a poor person. His acceptance of Jesus' call will imply on the one hand his loss of honour and social status, and on the other hand his participation in the *mokmin* praxis of Jesus. Seeing that the rich man went away grieving, it seems obvious that the rich man reckoned his following of Jesus would not compensate his loss of honour and social status accompanying his loss of possessions.

The Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16.19-31)

a) *Audience of the Parable.* We find in the immediate context that the primary audience of the parable were the Pharisees. Jesus' saying in Lk 16.1-10 was addressed to the disciples (v. 1) but the parable was told to the Pharisees "who were lovers of money" (16.14). The Pharisees were accused of greed, not for their religious practices. Jesus instructed his disciples in Lk 16.1-10 about 'love for money' and warned them against mammon. Although Jesus addressed the saying to his disciples, the Pharisees also heard what Jesus said and ridiculed him. As Jesus addressed the parable to the Pharisees not in connection with their religious practices but in connection with greed and wealth, we may say that the rich in general were targeted as Jesus' audience.

b) *Jesus' Pedagogical Intention.* R. Bultmann who divides the parable into two parts (vv. 19-26 and vv. 27-31) sees it as a polemic against the request of 'signs' in addition to the Torah and the prophets.[93] Jeremias sees Lazarus as only a secondary figure, introduced by way of contrast, so that the message of the parable is a warning to rich people who live a exuberant life without thinking of what is in store after death.[94] The emphasis of this parable lies in the second half that reports the dialogue between

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[93] Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, p. 196. Similarly, A.J. Cadoux, *The Parables of Jesus: Their Art and Use* (New York: Macmillan, 1931), pp. 124-128, takes the parable as a polemic against the Pharisees who demand "signs". B.T.D. Smith, *The Parables of the Synoptic Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937), pp. 135-141, argues that this parable's main focus is on the adequacy of the Torah.

[94] Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 186. He divides the parable into two parts: the first part concerned with the reversal of fortunes after death (vv 19-26) and the second part with the rich man's petition to Abraham for his brothers (vv. 27-31). He thinks the second part as an epilogue that Jesus added to the first part which was drawn from extant folk material. Then he argues that the parable is not about the

Abraham and the rich man. This does not mean that the first part of the parable is less important. The second part carries more weight only in the sense that the essential point that Jesus intends to disclose through the whole parable is found there. The purpose of telling this parable is to warn the rich people.[95] In this regard, Jeremias is correct in holding that this is a "parable of six brothers". We can accept that in the story the repentance of the rich man's brothers is concretely targeted. In elucidating the content of repentance, the first part of the parable plays a significant part, for it was only after the experience of the reversal of fortune alongside Lazarus that the rich man came to realise the necessity of repentance. If it was simply to warn rich people about the crisis after death, there would have been no particular point in introducing Lazarus on the scene. It would have been enough just to describe what life after death is in store for them. If this parable was given as a warning to the rich people who live in wealth without thinking of life after death, we expect to find the reason for that warning or the way to escape such crisis.

In the rich man's own remark, we will be able to find the hint to unlock the message of this parable. In v. 28, the rich man pleads to Abraham to send Lazarus to his five brothers to warn them "lest they also come into this place of torment". What is emphasised here is not the reality of a life after death but the fact that that the rich man

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rich man and Lazarus but about the living five brothers of the rich man. See also David L. Mealand, *Poverty and Expectation in the Gospels* (London: SPCK, 1980), p. 47.

[95] Also Hans Kvalbein, "Jesus and the poor: two texts and a tentative conclusion," *Themelios* 12 (1987), p. 84. Here, we may note the ambiguous interpretation of the significance of the parable by David L. Mealand. In this parable Mealand finds a doctrine of reversal "which is simpler and sharper than the teaching of the rabbis." See his *Poverty and Expectation in the Gospels*, p. 48. Mealand admits that the parable is shaped "as a warning to those who live in present luxury with no thought of what awaits them after death." *Ibid.*, p. 47. If this is so, the target audience of the parable then are the rich people. At the same time, Mealand holds that the parable reflects the situation in the early Church where "an impoverished Christian community find themselves confronted by a wealthy section of Jewish society, which disregards their sufferings and scorns their hope in life after death," and thus belongs to early Christian apologetic. *Ibid.*, p. 48. He argues that "these Christians look for a reversal of fortunes after death." *Ibid.* If we accept this interpretation, it may be that the target-audience of the parable would be the poor Christians. In this case, the parable is merely designed to encourage the poor Christians to endure the present sufferings in the hope of the reversed fortune in the life after death, not to defend their belief in the reversal of fortune after death. If the parable has the apologetic function, as Mealand holds, we need to ask why the poor Christians have to defend their belief in the after-life reality and the reversal of fortune. If the reversal of fortune is believed to be irreversible by the poor Christians, what point is there to warn the rich people about the after-life reality? If the parable was designed to remind the rich people of the reversal of fortune after death, is it not more appropriate to suggest that the purpose of telling this parable was to challenge the rich people to change their present life-style? In this sense, the doctrine of reversal does not reject but confirm the pedagogical intention of the parable.

is sent to the terrible place of torment. The place of torment does not represent a life after death. He hopes that his brothers will be able to avoid "this place of torment" by repenting. Moreover, v. 31 states that if they do not hear Moses and the prophets even a person risen from the dead cannot convince them. If their repentance means their acceptance of life after death, they should be convinced of life after death when they hear about its reality from someone risen from the dead. This plea contains in it the essence of what Jesus intends to deliver through this parable.

It seems highly suggestive that the term repentance appears on the lips of the rich man. We can read this as the rich man's self-evaluation of his own life on earth. In full view of his earthly life, the rich man sees the necessity of repentance, without which he cannot escape the predicament in hell. Thus, the rich man came to acquire a new perspective whereby he evaluates his life on earth as definitely wrong. We need to examine the parable to see what the new perspective of the rich man is.

c) *A New Perspective.* The wealth that the rich man enjoyed is given by God, so for his use of the wealth the rich man is responsible before God. The rich man is reminded of the fact that he *received* the good things while he was alive. By ascribing the cause of the rich man's suffering to his material abundance and its enjoyment on earth, Abraham is pointing to the rich man's life-style during his lifetime. This means that there must be something wrong in the rich man's leading an easy and comfortable life on earth. The good things that the rich man enjoyed are described as "nice dress and sumptuous daily feast". These two aspects explain the rich man's life-style in a pictorial way. This life-style is to be understood in relation to the honour and shame culture of the Jewish world. By wearing nice dress and having sumptuous daily feast, the rich man not only publicises his richness but secures his social status and honour, for dress and feast are symbols of social standing and honour in Jewish society.[96] Jesus was indirectly exposing that the rich man used his wealth only in maintaining his social status and honour. But, his use of the given wealth is accompanied by the responsibility before God, the real owner of the wealth.

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[96] Neyrey, "Loss of Wealth," p. 141. The colour of the dress represents the social status of the person wearing it. Only the social elite were able to wear dress of purple colour (cf. Exod 28.5, 6; Jer 10.9; 1 Macc 4.23; Rev 18.12).

In this parable, the abundance of the rich man's wealth is contrasted with the destitute predicament of the poor beggar Lazarus who was lying at his gate. At the same time, in the after-death situation, the suffering of the rich man is contrasted with the rest and comfort of poor Lazarus. This contrast does not seem to be accidental, but intentional. Abraham's refusal to grant the rich man's request is due to the fact that the rich man already enjoyed good things during his lifetime. The rich man's luxury and the poor Lazarus' suffering are bound together in one package.

The rich man faced a completely different destiny after death in that he himself, who is believed to be a legitimate offspring of Abraham, is rejected whereas the poor Lazarus, who was treated as an outcast in the community of Israel,[97] is found to have fellowship with Abraham. The abject state of Lazarus while he was alive was heightened by the description of a dog licking his sores.[98] It must have been most shocking to the rich man, who lived with the confidence in his sonship of Abraham, to face the completely different and unexpected destiny after death.

The rich man's use of the term 'father' to call Abraham was to invoke family solidarity and claim the right to be treated as a family member. His repeated calling of Abraham as 'father' even when his request was turned down three times shows that the rich man was convinced his status as Abraham's son during his lifetime. Although Abraham responds to him using the term 'son', his requests are rejected.[99] Here, the

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[97] Because Lazarus was suffering from a serious disease in addition to his abject poverty, he had no honour and status in the society. Thus he was not treated as a legitimate member of the Jewish community, but despised as a person cursed by God. Cf. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 184.

[98] This reminds us of 1 Kgs 21.19 where Elijah announces the divine punishment to Ahab that dogs will lick up his blood. In the eyes of the Jewish people, all the sufferings of Lazarus are divine punishment caused by his sin. Cf. W. R. Herzog II, *Parables as Subversive Speech. Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed* (Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1994), p. 119.

[99] Herzog, *ibid.*, p. 113, argues the fact that Abraham calls the rich man as affirms the validity of his sonship. The only thing he needs is to repent so that "the merits of Abraham may yet be able to stand him in good stead." Herzog also understands the use of reverential passive verb in v. 26 as functional instead of eternal, thou he acknowledges the work and wisdom of God in placing the chasm. So there is a room for the rich man to repent and be transferred to heaven by Abraham. However, this seems to be a complete misreading of the text. It is clearly stated that the subject of the repentance are not the rich man himself but the rich man's surviving five brothers (Lk 16.30), and the reason they have to repent is for them to avoid the place of torment. When the rich man makes a request for a sure way to cause his brothers to repent, it is assumed that he himself already repented. Abraham's refusal of his repeated request indicates rather that, regardless of the rich man's repentance, their respective status after death is determined and irrevocable. *Contra* Oesterly, *The Gospel Parables in the Light of the Jewish Background* (New York: MacMillan, 1936), p. 208, who explains the possibility of the rich man's salvation through repentance. As Richard Bauckham points out that "since the reversed

appearance of Abraham seems to have symbolic meaning in that Abraham himself was rich (Gen 13.2), and proved to others the divine origin of his blessing (Gen 14.13-24), purchased the burial cave for his wife Sarah at a high cost (Gen 23.13-16) and also was buried himself with honour (Gen 25.7-11).[100] This description of the reversed states of the rich man and Lazarus seems to have the effect of overturning the existing religious myth relating wealth to divine favour and poverty to divine curse.

If it is correct to interpret the expression of "in Abraham's bosom" as referring to Lazarus' sitting with Abraham at a meal table,[101] it proves the status of Lazarus as a legitimate member of Israel community. It is dramatically presented that such a legitimate member of the community, while Lazarus was left in abject poverty seeking the crumbs of bread falling from the table of the rich man. The rich man saw this same man, whom he neglected to care and left to suffer from hunger at his gate, sitting with Abraham in table fellowship.

d) *Repentance of the Rich: Seeing the Poor.* The rich man realises that his brothers will have to repent lest they come to such terrible place as he finds himself in, so he begs Abraham to send Lazarus to his five surviving brothers to warn them (vv. 27-28). This rich man's request is commented negatively by many scholars. Malina and Rohrbaugh interpret this request of the rich man as manifesting his unrepentant attitude to the end by expressing his concern only for his elite family, without showing any concern for the anonymous poor people in his own city. Herzog uses stronger words to criticise the rich man's blindness and unrepentant attitude: "The plea bargain underscores the rich man's blindness. . . The rich man's request is no more than an expedient designed to shield his class from the consequences of their luxury. . . His failure to recognise Lazarus as a brother at least implies that he does not intend the

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fortunes of the two men after death are a necessary consequence of the respective conditions in this life, nothing can happen after death to change them." In his "The Rich Man and Lazarus: The Parable and The Parallels," *NTS* 37 (1991), p. 231.

[100] Cf. Herzog II, *op cit.*, p. 130.

[101] Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 184. It is often pointed out that the phrase "Abraham's bosom" probably means to sleep with one's fathers or ancestors (cf. 1 Kgs 1.21; 2.10; 11.21; 4 Macc 13.17, etc.). However, in the present pericope, Lazarus' death is already mentioned in v. 22, so there will be no point in repeating his death. Segundo, *The Historical Jesus of the Synoptic*, p. 112f. sees here a contrast between the great banquet of Abraham and the sumptuous feast of the rich.

desired warning to change their attitudes or behaviour toward the poor."[102] However, it is difficult to interpret that his request shows any hint of elite mentality. First, it is important to note that the rich man begs Abraham to have mercy on him. In the Synoptic gospels, the expression, "Have mercy on me," is used only on two other occasions: by the ten lepers whom Jesus encountered on his way to Jerusalem (Lk 17.13) and by the blind beggar Bartimaeus (Lk 18.38,39). We may say that it was the language of a poor beggar. It seems obvious that he might have never used this expression during his lifetime. Even when he died, he died as a rich man. The phrase "he was buried" indicates that his family had means to give him a proper funeral. To Jesus' audience, this may indicate that the rich man's whole life was spent in wealth, which was believed to be a sign of God's blessing.[103] Besides that, he still have surviving five brothers who need to repent, which certainly alludes to their life in richness. By using the language of a beggar, he already realised his abject status destined to suffer agony in the flames (v. 24). He does not ask the reason why he was sent there, but only asks for a drop of water. It seems to be unrealistic to read the begging as showing his elite mentality, for it would be impossible for the rich man to hold the elite mentality toward Lazarus when he himself was suffering from extreme thirst and agony in the flames. He simply has to beg.

Secondly, the repentance of his brothers is not motivated by the rich man's selfish design, but by his painful realisation of the reversal of fortunes in the after-life reality. It was not just the crisis in store after death for the rich people denying the reality of life after death, but the reversal of fortune for poor people like Lazarus that evoked in the rich man's mind the need to repent while still alive. The reversal of fortune has something to do with his request to send Lazarus to his brothers to warn them. The rich man's realisation of the reversal of fortune was the cause for his change of perspective and his plea to Abraham to provide opportunity for his brothers to repent. In this respect, the reversal of fortune in the teaching of Jesus is not irreversibly fixed so as to encourage the poor people to endure present sufferings expecting the good fortune after death. It involves Jesus' pedagogy of the oppressors to the effect that what they do to the poor people is seriously counted by God and will be the decisive

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[102] Herzog, *op cit.*, p. 124.

factor in determining their fate after death. The repentance of his family should involve a concern for the poor, without which it becomes meaningless to refer to 'repentance'.

Thirdly, his request to have poor Lazarus sent to warn his brothers seems to be significant in alluding to his change of attitude toward Lazarus. The mission of Lazarus will be to warn, that is, to teach the rich man's brothers to put their repentance into effect. Hence, Herzog's interpretation that the desired warning by Lazarus to the surviving brothers has nothing to do with their attitudes or behaviour toward the poor is a simple misreading. Although the rich man did not specify what his brothers should repent of, we can find some hints in the narrative part of the parable which focused on the great disparity between the rich man and Lazarus.[104]

It is significant to note that, as Herzog points out, this parable introduces the rich man and Lazarus who are representatives of two social classes. The poor Lazarus lay at the gate of the rich man. Lazarus is described to be in destitute condition that will make him representative of the class of beggars of that time. In view of his skin condition clothed with ulcerated sores, he must have been shunned by people which makes it difficult for him even to beg. As B.B. Scott observes, Lazarus is even without the honour of a beggar.[105] He suffers from a perpetual hunger that is not solved even at the door of the rich man.[106]

e) *Jesus' Demand: Mokmin Praxis.* At the same time, it is pointed out by many interpreters that wealth *per se* is not condemned and poverty *per se* is not vindicated in the parable. John Stanley Glen seems to represent this view as he states: "It would be wrong to equate riches with sin and poverty with piety, as suggested by the simple, uninterpreted fact that the rich man went to hell and the beggar to heaven. The impression that the former ended in perdition for no other reason than the fact that he was rich, and that the latter ended in glory for no other reason than that the fact that he

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[103] Cf. Smith, *The Parables of the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 136.

[104] Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *The Biblical Interpreter: An Agrarian Bible in an Industrial Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), pp. 69-85.

[105] See his *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), p. 151.

was poor, is a sociological interpretation the Bible does not sanction."[107] However, we have to be careful in generalising in either way and any argument must be based on the proper interpretation of the given text. It is right that we should not automatically equate richness with sin and poverty with piety. Also, it is probably right to argue that the rich did not end in perdition simply because he was rich. In this case a question arises: why then is the rich man sent to hell? We will have to find the clue in the given text.

The rich man represents the urban elite who possess nearly everything, and the beggar Lazarus, the desperate expendable, who have almost nothing. What we note here is the fact that it is almost impossible for the two classes to live independently without affecting or being affected by each other in the society. On the contrary, by describing that the poor Lazarus lived at the gate of the rich man, Jesus rather emphasises their proximity.

The two classes exist in one social system: one class benefits and enjoys privileges in the society while the other class have to live even without the basic necessities of life. The juxtaposition of the rich man's luxury with the poor man's painful beggary is certain to expose the stark inequality and injustice in society.[108]

Bauckham denies any possibility of moralising the message of the parable on the basis of his observation that there is no mention of the moral qualities of the two men.[109] However, even though there is no direct mention of their moral qualities, the juxtaposition of the two contrasting conditions of life speaks loud and clear especially of the rich man's neglect of duty in society. Although he is correct in saying that "the poor man is blessed in the next life because he was poor in this life," he is incorrect in saying that "the rich man suffers in the next life just because he was rich in this life."[110]

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[106] Lazarus "desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table" (v. 21). As the verb "desired" here indicates an unfulfilled wish, Lazarus lives with constant hunger even at the gate of the rich man.

[107] J.S. Glen, *The Parables of Conflict in Luke* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), p. 72. For similar views, see Mealand, *Poverty and Expectation in the Gospels*, p. 32; Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, p. 103; Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 185.

[108] Bauckham, *op cit.*, p. 232.

[109] *Ibid.*

[110] *Ibid.*, pp. 232-233.

The delicious food and fine dress of the government officials are sharply criticised in contrast to the destitute situation of the people who suffer seriously from the lack of food. This criticism makes it clear that the unjust reality is not desirable at all and should be stopped. This reality in which a few wealthy and privileged people enjoy delicious food and fine dress when many people lose their lives because of their lack of food to sustain life. In the parable, we are not given any hint about the social position of the rich man,[111] but it seems to be obvious that he belongs to the rich urban elite which controls wealth, power, and privilege.[112] In the historical situation in which Israel was subjugated under the colonial power, the existence of rich people who had daily feast and wore purple dress all the time[113] was enough to evoke the poor peoples' resentment.

When the rich man realised the necessity to repent, he did not mean that his brothers should repent of living without considering the crisis after death. The repentance of the rich man's brothers is to change their attitude of callousness about the predicament of the poor people like Lazarus.[114]

The reference to the geographical proximity between the rich and Lazarus emphasises the dependence of Lazarus on the supply of the rich person for survival. And, the rich man's indifference to the sufferings of Lazarus was the immediate cause of his descent into hell.

We may conclude our reflection on this pericope in the following way: Jesus demands the rich people to repent of their indifference in caring for the poor, and to be a force liberating them from the situations that make them suffer. This is the standard by which their relationship with God will be judged and they will face their destiny after death on the basis of their praxis of caring the poor.

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[111] Although some argue that this rich man was one of the Pharisees or Saducees, there seems to be no evidence to support this.

[112] W. R. Herzog II, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, p. 117.

[113] The verb indicates that the rich man wears the purple dress habitually. The purple colour of his dress implies that what he usually wears is the garment of luxury which "insinuates that he lived like a king." Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke, X-XXIV*. p. 1130. Cf. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 183.

[114] Sugirtharajah, "For you always have the poor with you. . ." p. 105.

The Rich Fool (Lk 12.13-21)

The parable of the rich fool (vv. 16-21) was given as an example to Jesus' teaching in v. 15. In v. 15, Jesus taught the crowd to guard against covetousness and to perceive the value of life not on the basis of material abundance. Jesus' teaching concerning the use of wealth is elaborated in the parable.[115] First, we need to identify Jesus' audience.

a) *Jesus' Audience.* Although Jesus addressed this parable to the multitude, it was prompted by the request of someone in the crowd who asked Jesus to settle a legal problem with his brother concerning their father's inheritance. If the person has disputes with his brother over the inheritance, we may assume that he must be from a rich family. Those among the crowd who can have dispute over the inheritance are not the poor *min*, but the rich.[116] As the message of the parable is about the proper management of wealth, Jesus must have intended to address the parable to the rich people among the crowd.[117]

b) *Vicious Circle.* Jesus tells a parable about a rich man whose land produced abundantly and goes on to describe the rich harvest: "The land of the rich man brought forth plentifully" (v. 16). It seems to refer to a natural accretion of wealth, not by the unjust exploitation of people. But, a careful reading of this verse reveals something

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[115] Dennis J. Ireland, *Stewardship & the Kingdom of God. An Historical, Exegetical, & Contextual Study of the Parable of the Unjust Steward in Luke 16.1-13* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), p. 176, holds that the fundamental issue in vv. 13-21 is not social or economic, but religious in that it demands a wholehearted trust in God. However, it is unmistakably presented in the parable of the rich fool that the issue is the use of his wealth.

[116] Herman Hendricks, *The Parables of Jesus*, p. 97, interprets the request of 'someone in the crowd' represents the attitude of the crowd as a whole. He also takes the expression 'someone in the crowd' refers to public opinion. However, the immediate context does not say anything about the *opinion* of the people. Moreover, it is difficult to think that the crowd as a whole were people who had dispute over inheritance.

It is also incorrect to hold the view that Jesus addressed the saying to his disciples. *Contra* J. Massyngbaerde Ford, *My Enemy is My Guest. Jesus and Violence in Luke* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1984), p. 96. She identifies 'the man in the crowd' as a person who "is concerned about family inheritance, probably of considerable size," there is no doubt that the man was rich and it is more probable that Jesus was addressing this parable to the rich in the crowd, regardless of their status as disciples of Jesus.

[117] Robert F. O'Toole, "Luke's Position on Politics and Society in Luke-Acts," in *Political Issues in Luke-Acts*, ed. By Richard J. Cassidy and Philip J. Scharper (New York: Orbis, 1983), p. 12, also alludes to Jesus' pedagogical intention by saying that "the rich must be challenged and *informed* that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions" (emphasis mine).

significant, i.e., a vicious circle of wealth. The abundant harvest increased the wealth of the rich man *who was already rich*. He was a large land-holder,[118] and it was *the land* of the rich man that produced such plentiful harvest. There is no harvest for those who do not possess land. Thus, a vicious circle is referred to in which wealth begets wealth and poverty begets poverty. The surplus wealth seems to be something completely unexpected, for the rich man plans to build larger barns to store the harvest only after he reaped them.

The rich man came up with a plan on how to use the surplus wealth. His plan was to store them for future use. For that, he planned to pull down the old barns and build larger ones to store his excess harvest. He talks to himself to enjoy the abundant harvest. This may be seen as a normal economic decision of the kind made all the time in every field.[119] Behind this interpretation, however, there seems to lie the attitude that takes it for granted that a man can dispose of his wealth as he pleases. There seems to be nothing wrong in using what one possess as one pleases. Here, Jesus discloses a significant aspect in using one's wealth within society. Jesus may be warning against the abuse of wealth, for such a decision becomes troublesome in the ancient Mediterranean culture which had a perception of finite, limited goods.[120] The rich man's plan only shows his selfish intention to monopolise the harvest.

c) *God's Intervention: Death Sentence on the Rich.* God intervenes and destroys the rich man's plan by proclaiming a death sentence on the rich man: "Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" (v.20). Here, Jesus mentions two things: i) Jesus defies the rich man's plan completely. Behind this indictment of Jesus lies the assumption that the rich man's plan is not only unacceptable by God, but constitutes a criminal offence as well. Also, it contains the divine command to use wealth in tune with God's will. His life is confiscated, i.e., returned against his will. The use of the verb *apaiteo* implies that his life was in fact

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[118] Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 165.

[119] Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News according to Luke* (London: SPCK, 1984), p. 208.

[120] Bruce J. Malina, "Limited Good and the Social World of Early Christianity," *BTB* 8:4 (1978), pp. 162-176; also his *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), pp. 71-93; Cf. Scott, *Hear Then the Parable*, p. 137.

loaned to him.[121] Jesus was not talking about the inevitable but unpredictable death that any individual has to face nor the approaching eschatological judgement.[122] The expression *this night* emphasises the fact that the rich man's death was caused by God's providential intervention. ii) The rich man's wealth will be in the hands of other people. The question then arises: *what was wrong with the rich man's plan in storing the surplus wealth for himself?*

Everything seems to be going perfectly for the rich man. The land produces abundantly. If he stores the surplus products, he may live without worrying about the future for some time. He may be envied by people as richly blessed by God. But, suddenly his plan is stopped by God who promptly intervenes as soon as he notices the rich man's plan. God intervened at the stage when the rich man came to have an idea to hoard the products. He did not publicise the idea yet. The pericope records the rich man's dialogue with himself rejoicing over the prospect of enjoying abundant life. God had to stop his plan immediately before it is implemented. Then on what ground does God intervene to terminate the embryonic plan? God acted as the real owner of the land and its products.

The fatal mistake of the rich man was his mismanagement of the surplus wealth unexpectedly given to him.[123] His mismanagement of surplus wealth was ascribed to the fact the God was not considered a factor in the decision-making process. Danker correctly points out that the basic issue of this parable is related to one's proper attitude toward God as giver of life and prosperity.[124] By limiting his interpretation to the rich man's lack of confidence in God who will provide "sustenance and beauty sufficient for good life,"[125] Danker did not succeed in bringing out the full meaning of

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[121] Cf. *Wisdom of Solomon*, 15.8. See also Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 165; Marshall, *Commentary on Luke*, p. 524.

[122] *Contra* Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 165.

[123] Scott, *Hear Then the Parable*, pp. 138-139. Schrage, *op cit.*, p. 102, sees the primary point of the parable as warning against false confidence in earthly riches. Because he is already rich before he gains the surplus harvest and because the issue with the rich is what he should do with the unexpected abundant harvest, the charge that he puts confidence in earthly goods instead of in God does not appear valid.

[124] Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, p. 248; Richard H. Lowery, "Sabbath and Survival: Abundance and Self-restraint in a Culture of Excess," *Encounter* 54 (1993), p. 162.

[125] Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, p. 248.

the text. The rich man's lack of interest in practising the imperative to relinquish and redistribute wealth was not due to his lack of confidence in God who will sustain his life tomorrow. The rich man did not become selfish because of his fear for tomorrow, for he was described as already *rich* even before he was unexpectedly granted the surplus wealth. As a result, what made the rich man decide to hoard the surplus harvest for his selfish use in the future was not his obsession with his survival nor his lack of confidence in creation's (and the creator's) goodness, but his failure to side with God who, as provider of life, always takes care of those who suffer from the lack of basic necessities for life. In this sense, the rich fool reminds us of Ps 14.1 stating that the foolish denies the existence of God.[126] The proper attitude towards God is to have concern for the poor people for whom God shows preferential love, thus siding with God. This is to lay up treasures in heaven. Here, the rich man's great mistake is that he disregarded the existence of God in planning the use of his wealth. The rich man himself takes the place of God.[127]

The rich man's plan to use the surplus wealth is regarded as a serious criminal act by God. The plan to monopolise the surplus products of the land brought him a death sentence. If he loses his life, he will lose everything, even his right to enjoy the abundant harvest. We have to note here carefully the connection between the rich man's plan to monopolise the products of land with his loss of life. The immediate execution of the death sentence reflects the seriousness of the rich man's criminal offence.

The produce of the land are directly related with the sustenance of life. By monopolising the products of the land, the rich man caused other people suffer from the lack of necessities of life. Although limited to the individual dimension, Lowery offers an insightful observation that the background of this parable is the Sabbath tradition in the creation story that portrays the created world fundamentally benevolent and able to produce enough to sustain prosperous human life.[128] In other words, the

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[126] Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)*, p. 972; Hendricks, *The Parables of Jesus*, p. 103.

[127] Lowery, *op cit*, p. 161, observes that in the rich man's dialogue with himself is revealed his arrogance in assuming the place of God as provider of life and well-being.

[128] Lowery, *ibid.*, p. 143.

design of God the creator was to make the people survive and thrive without any difficulty by sharing the produce of the land.[129] The resources of life must not be kept in a barn for selfish consumption, but must flow out to other people. By taking the life of the rich man, God intends the wealth to be distributed and enjoyed by other people, thus restoring the order of creation. The criminal charge against the rich man is his violation of the creator's will concerning the use of the resources of life.

The announcement that his wealth will be enjoyed by other people emphasises the fact that, like his life, his possessions are also loaned to him by God. The ownership of his possessions does not belong to the rich man himself, but to God. He should not have forgotten God's announcement in Lev 25.23: "the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants." Thus, the rich man's plan to monopolise wealth met with divine sanction and prohibition.

d) *Jesus' Demand: Being Rich with God.* In the parable being rich with God is contrasted with laying up treasures on earth. Being rich with God is interpreted as laying up treasures in heaven. The result of laying up treasures for oneself on earth was death sentence and its immediate execution. We are not given any concrete explanation about what being rich with God means, but only the description that the rich man's decision to use his surplus wealth is an act of laying up treasures for himself, thus opposed to laying up treasures in heaven.

Laying up treasures in heaven is equated with helping the poor (Lk 12.33). In fact those who will suffer most by the rich man's monopoly of the resources of life are the poor people. Helping the poor is not simply a matter of practising charity on an individual dimension, but a matter of managing wealth that is entrusted to us by God. The poor and the needy people are the channels through whom the rich will lay up treasures for themselves in heaven. Those who remember the existence of God must pay attention to the poor and the needy around them. Thus, the message of this parable is clear.

Conclusion

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[129] *Ibid.*, p. 158.

Throughout his public ministry Jesus confronted the Jewish religious leaders and the rich members of his society. The nature of his confrontation with the ruling class cannot be perceived as the example of minjung movement or minjung revolt. What is disclosed in Jesus' confrontation with the ruling class is his intention to be their pedagogue. By breaking the religious rules, Jesus demonstrated that those teachings and practices were wrong in that they did not embody the *mokmin* spirit that reflects the nature of God's dealings with his people. We also argue that Jesus persistently demanded the rich to side with him in *mokmin* praxis, for the latter is the channel whereby the justice of God could be effected through the ruling class of Jewish society. At any rate, some of the ruling class sided with Jesus, but the majority of them sought to destroy him because of the radical nature of his teachings. In this regard, Jesus' mission as the pedagogue of the oppressors reflects probably the most radical and important aspect of his mission.

CONCLUSION and PROSPECT

In this thesis, we attempted to describe an image of Jesus *both* relevant to the hermeneutical ethos of the Korean people *and* faithful to the Gospels, and to point out the failure of minjung theology to present a holistic image of the historical Jesus and his teachings to the Korean people. In our concluding remarks, we will gather up the results of our study against the broader backdrop of the endeavour to construct a contextually-relevant way of doing theology in Korea as well as in Asia.

I. Re-Orientation of Jesus Research

Minjung theology in Korea presents a Korean description of the historical Jesus as the minjung Jesus. Minjung theology contributed significantly to awakening Christians in Korea to the unjust socio-economic realities of the 1970s and 1980s. However, with the democratisation of Korean society after the civilian government took power in 1992, the relevance of minjung theology, which had been criticised by some conservative theologians,[1] came to be seriously challenged even by those who were in the minjung movement.[2] We need to re-emphasise at this point that the concern of minjung theologians is still contextually valid, for economic injustice in Korean society persists and the sufferings of the poor *min* are not lessened. In other words, even though both the theological and the contextual relevance of minjung theology are challenged, it must not be ignored that the discovery of minjung realities in Korea is still relevant. It is therefore necessary to examine the description of the historical Jesus in minjung theology both to identify the failure of minjung theology, theologically and contextually and to re-emphasise biblical and contextual concern for the poor *min*. Our criticism is that the image of 'minjung Jesus' failed either to present a holistic picture of the historical Jesus to the Korean people or to represent their intellectual ethos. This study describes the historical Jesus as a '*mokmin* Jesus' in the sense that Jesus' life and teachings embodied the *mokmin* spirit. We argue that the perception of the historical Jesus as a *mokmin* Jesus represents both the true picture of Jesus recorded in

[1] Cf. Seyoon Kim, "Is 'Minjung Theology' a Christian Theology?", pp. 251-274.

[2] Cf. Kyung-Seog Suh, "Crisis of Minjung Theology," pp. 187-204.

the Gospels and a contextually relevant understanding of the *Jongshin* ('Spirit of Teaching') of Jesus, the Master of Christianity.

I.1. The Historical Jesus in Minjung Theology

The starting-point of minjung theology is the discovery and experience of minjung realities in Korea in the 1970s and 1980s when the Korean people suffered under the dictatorship of the military regimes. The theological agenda of minjung theologians was to present a theological ground for a social change. It was perceived to be imperative to change the unjust oppressive political power and the exploitative economic structures in Korean society. The first step in the development of minjung theology was the discovery of minjung realities. Although there exists no consensus in describing the identity of minjung, most minjung theologians perceive the minjung as those who are politically oppressed and economically exploited. The second step was to highlight the existence of the minjung in the history of Korea based on the assumption that the minjung are the subjects of history. Yong-Bock Kim emphasises the difference between the understanding of minjung's subjectivity in minjung theology and the concept of *juche* ('subject') in North Korea or the concept of subjectivity of the proletariat in Marxism. However, it is not wrong to find the influence of Marxism on minjung theology in that minjung theologians dichotomise the constitution of society between the minjung majority and the small number of ruling class, and present the minjung as the subject of social change. Hence it is natural for minjung theologians to attempt to identify the historical evidence for minjung revolts in Korean history. In this respect we may say that the hermeneutical assumption of minjung theologians is that the unjust society is subverted through the minjung revolt. The description of the historical Jesus in minjung theology is a theological attempt to support this idea of social change.

Jesus' Status as Minjung

The first theological approach is to find biblical evidence which shows the historical Jesus as a mere minjung. Minjung theologians, particularly Byung-Mu Ahn and Nam-Dong Suh, refer to Jesus' origin from Galilee, his lack of formal education, his occupation as a carpenter and his life-style as a homeless person as biblical evidence for the minjung status of Jesus. Minjung theologians also assert that Jesus' association

with the contemporary minjung demonstrates his identification with them. At the same time, Jesus is perceived to be the collective symbol of the minjung, whose life and ministry is to be viewed as a projection of the collective potentiality of the minjung. The death of Jesus is interpreted as the collective death of the minjung and his resurrection as the rising of the collective minjung in revolts.

Jesus' Mission as Minjung Movement

Minjung theologians maintain that the Jesus movement was the Kingdom of God movement which was characterised as a minjung movement. The Kingdom of God is understood in minjung theology in two aspects: 1) the expectation of the direct reign of God and the rejection of any form of human ruler; 2) liberation of the poor minjung from their poverty. We notice here that the hermeneutical assumption of minjung theologians does not attribute any positive role to the ruling class, who are simply the target of subversion. In minjung theology, Jesus' healing ministry, his exorcism in particular, is interpreted as the projection of minjung's potentiality and as an anti-Roman minjung revolt. Jesus' table fellowship with tax collectors and sinners is understood as the exemplary demonstration of Jesus' minjung movement.

Critical Evaluation

The discovery of minjung realities and the concern to build a just society in which the poor and the oppressed will be liberated is a contextual issue in Korea. Minjung theology in Korea made a positive contribution in awakening the Korean Christians to the suffering reality of the minjung and the social responsibility of Christians to help the poor and oppressed *min*. However, to present Jesus as a mere 'minjung' does not clarify but complicate the image of the historical Jesus in the Korean context. First, if the image of Jesus is described as a 'minjung Jesus', it becomes difficult to embrace the religious ethos of the Korean people. The image of Jesus as a 'minjung Jesus' cannot touch the heart of the minjung. The aspiration of the minjung is to be liberated from the state that makes them suffer poverty and exploitation. It is then natural for them to expect a liberator. What we observe in the minjung description of the historical Jesus is that minjung theologians paradoxically endorse the non-minjung status of Jesus, for, if Jesus was a mere minjung, the presentation of Jesus as a 'minjung Jesus' cannot deliver any message of hope to the minjung. The more Jesus' non-minjung, royal status is

highlighted, the more his siding with the minjung will produce radical and hopeful changes for the minjung. Insofar as Jesus is the central figure in Christianity, the perception of Jesus as a "mere" minjung cannot represent the religious ethos of the people.

Secondly, the hermeneutical assumption of minjung theologians which perceive the minjung revolt as a force to bring about the desired social change does not represent the thought-world of the Korean people. In other words, though it may not be legitimate for us to criticise minjung theologians for importing a foreign theory of social change and applying it to Korean society, we may point out that the theory of social change that minjung theologians have adopted does not come from the intellectual heritage of the Korean people. As a result, the solution for the change of unjust society presented by minjung theologians hardly touches the heart of the people, for it is not formulated from inside the thought-world of the Korean people. At this time when the contextual relevance of the minjung theology is seriously challenged in Korea,[3] we need to re-discover the legitimacy of the theological concern of minjung theologians and to re-present our theological reflections on the historical Jesus as the biblical basis for doing theology in Korea.

I.2. The *Mokmin* Jesus as a Korean Image of the Historical Jesus

In this study we argue that the perception of the historical Jesus as the *mokmin* Jesus provides both a biblically-faithful and contextually-relevant understanding of the historical Jesus. First of all, we need to explain the concept of *mokmin* that we use as a hermeneutical key for the description of the historical Jesus.

The Concept of Mokmin

The term *mokmin* is a combination of two Chinese characters *mok* and *min*, and it means 'to serve the people'. We obtain the concept from the book written by Yak-Yong Chong, a Korean thinker in the early 19th century. Chong's idea of *mokmin* also

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[3] Cf. Chang-Shik Noh, "Minjung Theology and the Praxis of Minjung Church," (in Korean) in *Jesus, Minjung, Nation* (Seoul: Korean Theological Institute, 1992), pp. 634-657, observes that minjung theology is found pastorally inapplicable in minjung churches in Korea. As the democratisation of Korean society proceeded after a civilian government took power in 1992, the relevance of a minjung theology that supports minjung revolt as the decisive factor in social change is seriously challenged. Cf. Kyung-Seog Suh, "Crisis of Minjung Theology," pp. 187-204.

originated from his discovery and experience of the suffering reality of the poor *min* during his eighteen-year exile. Chong exposed the sufferings of the poor *min* and the exploitation of the government officials, and demanded *mokmin* praxis from the local government officials. By calling upon the government to adopt *mokmin* praxis, Chong presented his idea of a just society in which the poor *min* are liberated from their poverty and in which the dignity of the *min* is not trampled upon. *Mokmin* praxis is addressed to the government officials, i.e., the ruling class, so we may say that it is primarily a practical ethics for the ruling class and the rich members of society. What is significant in the concept of *mokmin* is that it represents social change or social reform *from above*, which is acceptable as an ideal way that the society should be run in the history of the Korean people. We attempt then to describe the life and mission of the historical Jesus using *mokmin* as the hermeneutical key.

The Image of Mokmin Jesus

a) *The Royal Status of Jesus.* Contrary to what minjung theologians argue in connection with the status of the historical Jesus, we argue that Jesus was a royal figure. We find that the various titles such as Son of God, Son of David, Son of Man, together with the presentation of Jesus as the shepherd of the people, indicate without doubt that Jesus understood himself to be a royal figure and was perceived as such by his contemporary people.

b) *Jesus' Mokmin Praxis.* Although being a royal figure, Jesus showed his solidarity with the poor *min* in his time. Jesus' healing ministry demonstrates his solidarity with the poor *min* in a dramatic way. Jesus touches the untouchables of Jewish society, releases the *han* ('the accumulated grief') of the poor *min*, restores the voice of the people dehumanised by demon-possession, and brings socially-ostracised people back to normal life. By showing his compassion to the hopeless poor *min*, Jesus became a source of hope for those who were marginalised and alienated in society.

Jesus showed his *mokmin* praxis by awakening the social responsibility of the leaders of Jesus community. Jesus selected the twelve as leaders of his community and as transmitters of his teachings. By performing the unthinkable act of foot-washing, Jesus instructed that his community, where status distinctions may not exist, is to be

characterised by service. Jesus made it clear that he was performing the act of foot-washing as an example which his disciples could follow. Also, Jesus taught his disciples not to imitate the domination system that is to be observed in the secular political realm (Mk 10.41-45). By instructing his disciples to bear fruit (Jn 15.1-6), to help the poor (Mk 14.7 *pars*) and to feed the sheep (Jn 21.15-19), Jesus consistently inculcated his disciples to follow his *mokmin* praxis.

The final, but not the least important, aspect of Jesus' *mokmin* praxis is manifested in his pedagogy of the oppressors. The Gospel writers report Jesus' confrontations with the Jewish religious leaders from the beginning of his ministry. We perceive that Jesus' confrontation with the Jewish religious leaders was intentional and demonstrates his intention to be their pedagogue. Jesus' breaking of the Sabbath regulation and his act of temple cleansing show that Jesus wanted to challenge the religious leaders of his time to side with him in *mokmin* praxis. Jesus' instruction to the rich members of the society also discloses his intention to be their pedagogue, in that he demanded them to side with him by liberating the poor *min* from their poverty. This aspect of Jesus' ministry was even more radical than his gesture of siding with the poor *min*, for the cost of his pedagogy of the oppressors was his own life.

We do not find any hint of minjung revolt in the life and ministry of the historical Jesus. Jesus did not present any programme for social reform or social change, but there is unmistakable evidence in the Gospels that Jesus embodied the *mokmin* praxis which has ramifications for a radical social change.

II. Theological Implications of *Mokmin* Perception of the Historical Jesus

In presenting the *mokmin* image of the historical Jesus, we may find wider theological implications through reading the biblical material in Korea. First, in the Korean context, we find it necessary to articulate the teachings of Jesus employing the language and concepts that constitute the intellectual, cultural and religious ethos of the Korean people. In this way, we can build an intelligible and relevant theology for them. The implication of this theological articulation is that the people are not excluded from the audience of theology, for the concept of *mokmin* is taken from the intellectual heritage of the Korean people. Secondly, by replacing the image of minjung Jesus by that of *mokmin* Jesus, we intend to point out that theological reflection on the

historical Jesus must be true to the Gospels. Although minjung theologians attempt to present a contextually-relevant image of the historical Jesus, their hermeneutical assumption disables them from reading the whole biblical data, so that they interpret the Gospel writings selectively. By doing so, minjung theologians have alienated themselves from the religiosity of the Korean people. Here, we need to describe the theological framework that validates such an articulation within the broad dimension of building an Asian way of doing theology.

II.1. Contours of the New Theological Challenge in Asia

Christianity began its history in the multi-religious soil in Korea, as well as in other Asian countries, as a religion with a foreign origin, since Western missionaries transmitted it to the peoples of Asia. Naturally, the church in Asia has been under the influence of and guided by various forms of theological teaching produced in the West. In recent decades, however, voices demanding an independent Asian theology are growing louder, and Asian theologians present their own perceptions of Christian teachings, developing their own ways of doing theology in Asia. This quest for an independent Asian mode of doing theology is prompted by the awareness that Asia needs to build a Christian theology relevant to the life-situations of Asian peoples. At a time when the demands for an Asian way of doing theology are erupting in every direction, it is proper to examine the motive for this theological challenge from the Asian theologians and evaluate their arguments for an authentic Asian way of doing theology. We will examine first how Asian theologians perceive the Western mode of doing theology in the context of their effort to build an authentically Asian way of doing Christian theology.

Archie C. C. Lee explains why western theology is not relevant to Asian theologians and what should be the case in the Asian context. He emphasises the necessity of building an Asian way of doing theology by citing a story that Confucius told to Tzu Kung, one of his disciples, as reported in the Book of Chuang Tzu. The story goes as follows:

> Once a sea bird alighted in the suburbs of the Lu capital. The marquis of Lu escorted it to the ancestral temple, where he entertained it, performing the Nine Shao music for it to listen to and presenting it with the meat of the T'ai-lao sacrifice to feast on. But the bird only looked dazed and forlorn, refusing to eat a single slice of meat or drink a cup of

> wine, and in three days it was dead. This is to try to nourish a bird with what would nourish you instead of what would nourish a bird. If you want to nourish a bird with what nourished a bird, then you should let it roost in the deep forest, play among the banks and islands, float on the rivers and lakes, eat mudfish and minnows, follow the rest of the flock in flight and rest, and live anyway it chooses.[4]

Lee reflects on this story and observes that "to nourish a sea-bird in a way which is completely alien to sea birds is against the nature of sea birds and therefore it will eventually bring death instead of life."[5] He then applies this to doing Christian theology in Asia, arguing that this tale of the sea-bird will enlighten us in our search for the Asian way of doing Christian theology. He compares the various efforts to nourish the sea bird in the ancestral temple to theology done in a foreign way. As the marquis who tried to nourish the bird with what nourishes man eventually killed the bird, doing theology "using non-Asian texts, alienated from the Asian socio-political and cultural-historical contexts, disregarding the Asian experiences and despising without discrimination the richness of Asian spirituality" will bring about the same result of destroying the integrity of Asian peoples.[6] He characterises Western theology as a "super-imposed theology" that will destroy our creativity and imagination and enslave the Asian minds. Thus, he concludes that "it is our rights and privileges to be fed by the nourishment infiltrated in our cultural-religious traditions."[7] Western theology is alienated from the life-context of Asian people in that it cannot supply nourishment to them.

Although Lee tries very hard to bring home the necessity for Asian theologians to build an Asian way of doing theology, his argument here is ambiguous. We may also observe that Lee makes some rather contradictory remarks in his article. First, it is not clear with whom Lee equates the sea-bird in the Asian theological context. It may be argued that it is not his purpose to identify either the sea-bird or the marquis in the Asian scene of doing theology. However, it is important to be as clear as possible in identifying the group of people that can be equated with the sea-bird before digging

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[4] Archie C. C. Lee, "Prophetic and Sapiential Hermeneutics in Asian ways of doing theology," *Doing Christian Theology in Asian Ways*, ATESEA Occasional Papers No. 12, 1993, p. 1.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

out any theological implications from the tale, for the application of the story is significantly affected by that. By arguing that Western theology "cuts *us* off from the life contexts and captivates *our* fellow Asians in the ancestral temple of another people," he seems to refer to both the Asian theologians and the Asian people as being in the position of the sea-bird. The same thing is to be observed in his claim that Western theology "enslaves the Asian minds and destroy *our* creativity and imagination." If the sea-bird can designate Asian theologians, who can the marquis of the tale be in the Asian theological context? The necessity for raising this question arises from the fact that Lee's article deals with the topic of 'doing theology in Asian ways'. In that case, it is quite natural for us to expect Lee's elaboration of the role and responsibility of the Asian theologians who are the subjects of doing Christian theology in Asian ways. It seems obvious that Lee regards theology as the food and drink provided for the sea-bird, as he states that "theology done in a foreign way. . . will be far from the hope of nourishing but. . . ." Who is the provider of the meat and wine except the Asian theologians who are doing theology in a foreign way? By putting Asian theologians and Asian people in the same boat, Lee's argument loses consistency.

Secondly, if it is appropriate to identify the sea-bird with the Asian people and the marquis with these Asian theologians who do theology in a foreign way, Lee's criticism in his article should be interpreted as directed both against Asian theologians and Western theology. Asian theologians, especially those trained within the framework of the Western theology, have at last become aware of the gap between the theology they have practised and the Asian realities in which they are situated. There is one important thing in the tale that cannot be applied to the Asian context, which is the fate of the sea-bird, i.e., the Asian people. It can be argued that, in the history of the Asia, the people have not died, even though the religious elite have so far failed to provide nourishment through being captivated in their academic world. The people do not care about the sophisticated religious logic which they are not able to understand. However, they have the creativity to mix what they have imbibed from their religious teachings with their folk belief, thus indigenising these religious teachings within their life contexts. The quest for Asian ways of doing theology is thus primarily for Asian

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[7] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

theologians who have become homeless between Western theology that is foreign in the Asian context and the Asian people who have contextualised the Christian faith in their own way independently of any theory of contextualisation.

Thirdly, it seems extremely difficult for us to reconcile Lee's harsh criticism of Western theology that will certainly bring destruction to the integrity of the Asian people, enslave the Asian minds, and destroy the creativity and imagination of the Asian theologians with his appeal to Western theologians to support his own arguments. After arguing that "the tale of the sea-bird will enlighten us in our doing Christian theology in Asian ways,"[8] Lee states only several lines after that James A. Sanders' study on true and false prophecy "will contribute to the understanding of our theological task in Asia."[9] Again, to support his argument for sapiential hermeneutics, Lee refers to Western theologians namely Donn F. Morgan, Samuel Terrien, and James Crenshaw all of who illuminated Amos' use of popular wisdom to proclaim his message.[10] Fourthly, if we further reflect on the tale of the sea-bird, Lee will have to admit the interpretation that western theology nourishes western people, though it fails to nourish Asian people. In that case, another question will be raised: why does western theology, that nourishes western people, fail to nourish Asian people? Based on these observations, we may say that Lee is not quite successful in elucidating the necessity to build an Asian way of doing theology.

C. S. Song expresses the confidence and excitement of doing theology in Asia with Asian ways like this:

> Doing theology in Asia today is exciting because it is no longer dictated by rules and norms established elsewhere outside our living space called Asia. Its contents are not determined any more by schools and systems of theology formed under the influence of cultural elements alien to cultural experiences of Asia. Its style - yes, one must speak of style of doing theology - does not have to be shaped by thought-forms and life-experiences remote from Asian humanity.[11]

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[8] *Ibid.*

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[11] Song, "Let us do Theology with Asian Resources," p. 208.

Song refers to three aspects that make the task of doing theology in Asia exciting. First, by asserting that doing theology in Asia today is not dictated by 'rules and norms established elsewhere outside our living space called Asia,' he seems to argue that Asian theologians do not need to follow the rules and norms of doing theology established in the West. Secondly, he states that it is an exciting time to be doing theology in Asia because the contents of Asian theology are determined independently from the intervention of the schools and systems of theology formed under the influence of western cultural elements. As the Western schools and systems of theology were formed under the influence of Western cultural elements, Asia should have her own schools and systems of theology produced within her own cultural experiences. Thirdly, Song points out that the Western style of doing theology that has been shaped by the thought-forms and life-experiences remote from the Asian humanity is not to dictate Asian style of doing theology.

The new challenge for Asian theologians, then, comes from an awareness of the foreignness of western theology. Here, it is necessary to elaborate how the foreignness of doing theology in the Western form is perceived by Asian theologians.

II.2. Critique of Western Theology

The theological struggles of Asian theologians in articulating authentically Asian forms of doing theology indicate their critical awareness of the shortcomings of western mode of doing theology. What makes Asian theologians aware of the necessity to formulate Asian way of doing theology is the observation that Western theology and its way of doing theology are not relevant to the Asian soil. It will be highly significant to clarify what makes Western theology and its way of doing theology irrelevant in the Asian soil, for the answer to this will be important in determining the orientation of doing theology in the Asian context.

Although there exist various perceptions on the necessity to build an Asian Christian theology, all Asian theologians involved in the task seem to share one theological presupposition, which is that the Western way of doing theology is not relevant to Asia. Here, we identify two perspectives: 1) Western theology is irrelevant to Asia because it is the answer to Western questions and the product of the Western cultural milieu; 2) Western theology is irrelevant to Asia because it is alienated even from the life-situations of the Western people. Most Asian theologians do not seem to

be aware of the necessity of distinguishing between these two perspectives. The difference is important for the direction of building an authentic Asian Christian theology is deeply related to those perspectives.

Western Answers to Western Questions

The first is to perceive western theology as a western answer to a western question. It is sometimes argued that, because western theology is the product of the western culture, it cannot be imported to Asian peoples without any critical reflections on it.[12] C. S. Song observes that the irrelevance of western theology arises from the fact that it "cannot serve the spirituality that grows, develops, and creates outside the framework of Constantinian Christianity."[13] Song presents his perception of western theology as

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[12] John R. Davis, *Poles Apart? Contextualizing the Gospel* (Bangalore, India: Theological Book Trust, 1993), p. 13, observes the irrelevancy of western theology arising from the fact that all theologies are by nature culturally-conditioned. Though he himself is a western missionary to Thailand, Davis expresses a strong negative opinion about the exportation of western theological books *en masse* to the non-Western world, which will be counter-productive for three reasons: "Firstly, they perpetuate a Western world-view, Western values, and Western theological presuppositions. Secondly, such ventures relieve churches in other lands of the urgent priority to develop their own theologies. Thirdly, they unconsciously perpetuate an unacceptable theological imperialism." *Ibid.*, p. 14. Though it is true that the massive influx of Western theological books into Asia and other non-Western world has caused much damage in the effort to develop vernacular theologies, it will be a rash criticism to negate any positive influence on the Christian life of the non-Western people. We may accept this as a genuine self-criticism of a Western missionary-theologian, but we need to present our reflection on the positive and negative impact of this phenomenon from an Asian perspective.

First, it seems to be difficult to argue that the massive exportation of Western theological books perpetuate a Western world-view and Western values in Asia, though the influence of the Western theological presuppositions may persist. It is very much a Western perspective to conclude that the exportation of Western theological books will dominate the world-view and values in the non-Western world. It will become either a gross misunderstanding of Asia or an unconscious manifestation of Western imperialism to perceive the world-view and values of Asian peoples as defenceless and vulnerable in the face of Western world-views and values or to suppose that Asian theologians accepted the Western world-views, Western values, and Western theological presuppositions uncritically and unconditionally. It may be more correct to argue that the continuous influx of Western theological books does not perpetuate the Western theological presuppositions, but causes Asian theologians to become critical of Western theology and to seek a way to develop their own theologies. Second, his self-criticism may be interpreted as pointing out the fact that Asian theologians neglect to develop their own theologies, simply depending on Western theological books, even when they realise the urgent priority to do the task. This may be criticised as a typical Western perspective. Asian theologians are not neglecting their given theological agenda. It is when Asian theologians, who have learned and taught theology within the Western framework, began to realise its irrelevancy to the Asian soil that they came to realise the need to develop their own theologies as their urgent priority. Once they perceived this as an urgent priority, Asian theologians join force in presenting their own appreciation of Christian theology from inside the Asian realities, instead of being dominated by the 'unacceptable theological imperialism'.

thoroughly contextualized into "the western norms of thought and life."[14] Byung-Mu Ahn emphasises de-westernisation of theology in Asia, particularly in Korea, because he realised that "the theological thought of the West is the question and answer projected in the historical situation of Western men."[15]

This criticism has the implication that western theology is a theology contextualized into the life-situations of western peoples. If western theology is perceived as the western answers to western questions, it should at least provide an example of doing theology for Asian theologians, though the final theological product may not be directly applicable to the Asian situations. There should then be no reason for Asian theologians to show a negative reaction against western theology or the western way of doing theology. Although we may hesitate to accept western theology as having universal validity, the way of doing theology is what Asian theologians must learn from their counterparts in the West, for the motive of the search for Asian theology is to find ways to provide Asian answers to Asian questions.

Theology Alienated from Life-Context

The second is to perceive western theology as irrelevant to Asian contexts because western theology *itself* is alienated from the life context of western peoples. In other words, western theology is criticised as being alienated from the realities of western people, and failed to be contextualized in the life-situations of western peoples. It is thus apparent why we do not wish to copy western theology and their way of doing theology in Asia.

The *Seoul Declaration*, adopted at the Sixth Asia Theological Consultation which met in Seoul, August 23-31, 1982, makes it clear that western theology must be criticised for being alienated from the life-situations of today:

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[13] C.S. Song, *Third-Eye Theology: Theology in Formation in Asian Settings* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Press, 1979), p. 5. In this book which presents his practice of the Asian way of doing theology, Song argues that Asian theology must overcome the framework of western theology and construct Asian theology from within the spirituality and heart of Asian peoples with the Asian epistemology which he calls the third-eye.

[14] Song, *Third-Eye Theology*, p. 4.

[15] Byung-Mu Ahn, "Christianity and Westernisation," *Gidokgyo Sasang* (Christian Thought) 12 (1971), p. 62.

> The western approach to theology has deeply affected our own understanding of theological task. We have, therefore, dealt with a number of pitfalls into which western theology has fallen and which we must avoid. Western theology is by and large rationalistic, moulded by Western philosophies, preoccupied with intellectual concerns, especially those having to do with the relationship between faith and reason. All too often, it has reduced the Christian faith to abstract concepts which may have answered the questions of the past, but which fail to grapple with the issues of today.[16]

The statement does not seem quite clear in its content, but it succeeds in pointing out that western theology deals only with intellectual concerns not related to the concrete life-situations of the people. Theology in the West is discussed only among theologians within their academic guild centred on the themes that interest scholars who dominate the theological discourse. Byung-Mu Ahn also observes that western theology is kept in the academic and abstract world. He states: "While reading the theological books produced by the Western theologians, I feel that for them theology *per se* becomes the context of doing theology. In other words, their reference is always to other theologians like: 'Barth said this and Bultmann said that', or 'Bornkamm argued this and Tillich argued that', etc. Their theology is characterised as confrontation between words and words or between views and views. In turn this academic confrontation creates a context for doing theology. The context of doing theology has become the academic world, being alienated from the realities."[17] It is not always clear what Asian

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[16] "Seoul Declaration," in Bong Rin Ro & Ruth Eshenaur (eds.), *The Bible & Theology in Asian Contexts. An Evangelical Perspective on Asian Theology* (Taiwan: Asia Theological Association, 1984), p. 23.

[17] Byung-Mu Ahn, *Speaking on Minjung Theology* (Seoul: Han Gil Sa, 1993), p. 34. In connection with this, it is noteworthy that Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza called for an ethos of public accountability in biblical scholarship in her presidential address at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Boston in December 1987. After referring to the 1908 SBL-presidential address of Frank Porter who charted three shifts in the ethos of biblical scholarship, she points out that a fourth paradigm is emerging in the process of decentering the previous paradigm: it is a rhetorical ethical turn. She characterises what is currently perceived as 'true scholarship' in the scholarly community of SBL as 'scientist ethos', and emphasises the communicative nature of biblical interpretation: "Biblical interpretation, like all scholarly inquiry, is a communicative practice that involves interests, values, and visions." Cf. Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "The Ethics of Biblical Interpretation: Decentering Biblical Scholarship," *JBL* 107/1 (1988), p. 4. It is worth quoting what she tries to bring home by surveying the previous SBL-presidential addresses: "[I]n the past forty years, no president of the SBL has used the opportunity of the presidential address for asking the membership to consider the political context of their scholarship and to reflect on its public accountability. Since 1947 no presidential address has explicitly reflected on world politics, global crises, human sufferings, or movements for change. Neither the civil rights movement nor the various liberation struggles of the so-called Third World, neither the assassination of Martin Luther King nor the Holocaust has become the rhetorical context for biblical studies. Biblical studies appear to have progressed in a political vacuum, and scholars seem to have understood themselves as accountable

theologians mean when they refer to the alienation of theology from the realities of the people. Most of them, including minjung theologians, seem to suggest using Asian resources, i.e., Asian stories, folklore, religious and cultural heritage, and the socio-economic issues, etc., to create an Asian theological discourse. But, few seem to explain whose questions the Asian theologians attempt to answer: Are the theological questions of Asian theologians the questions that are raised by the people? Or, are they the questions that Asian theologians imagine to be Asian questions, when Asian people are not interested in those questions? Here, we find it necessary to re-orientate the way of doing theology in Asia, which we will present in terms of a fusion of horizons.

II.3. Fusion of Horizons

Fusion of Theology and Hyunjang

As western theology is criticised as being alienated from the life-situations of the people, the search for an authentic Korean and Asian theology must be characterised by the fusion of theology and *hyunjang* ('the *Sitz im Leben* of the people'). The theological challenge for Asian theologians is to bridge the gap between theology and the life of the people. In connection with the task of biblical hermeneutics, Anthony Thiselton conceives that the hermeneutical task is an active engagement between interpreter and text, for the interpreter is culturally and historically conditioned.[18] Thiselton observes that in the hermeneutical task the interpreter's own horizon is

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solely - as Robert Funk puts it - to the vested interests of the 'fraternity of scholarly trained scholars with the soul of a church'." (p. 9.) She particularly criticises Enslin who insists that 'biblical critics must be emotionally detached, intellectually dispassionate, and rationally value-neutral'. (p. 10.) Cf. Morton S. Enslin, "The Future of Biblical Studies," *JBL* 65 (1946), pp. 1-12. Enslin supports a scholarly in-house discourse and regards the demand that the biblical research "strengthen faith and provide blueprints for modern conduct" as one and the same virus which has poisoned German scholarship. Fiorenza counters Enslin's argument by observing that his stance is in fact more dangerous than the political forgetfulness that he thinks has poisoned German biblical scholarship. She summarises the scientist ethos of biblical scholarship: "A-political detachment, objective literalism, and scientific value-neutrality are the rhetorical postures that seem to be dominant in the positivistic paradigm of biblical scholarship." (p. 11.) She concludes with a call for a paradigm shift in the ethos and rhetorical practices of biblical scholarship. Fiorenza's emphasis on the public accountability of biblical scholarship represents a positive alternative of western theology.

[18] Anthony Thiselton, *The Two Horizons. New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), p. xix.

corrected, reshaped and enlarged. In the Korean context, as in other countries in Asia, this aspect is expressed in terms of the hyphenated identity of Asian Christians.

a) *Discovery of the Asian Thought-World*

The theological reflections of Asian theologians are based on the awareness of their identity both as Christians and as Asians. It was Christopher Duraisingh, an Indian theologian, who observed that such a consciousness was dormant in many Asian Christians even if they had Asian-Christian identity, and emphasised the importance of awakening such an awareness among Asian Christians. Today, many Asian-Christian theologians express their hyphenated identity. As the awareness of the hyphenated identity has a significant bearing on the way theology is done, we need to probe the theological implications of the Asian-Christian hyphenated identity.

When Asian theologians refer to their Asian-Christian identity, most of them seem to mean the confluence of the Christian tradition with the Asian religious-cultural tradition which is frequently identified with Buddhism, Confucianism or the actual belief of the Asian people (e.g., Shamanism). Duraisingh seems to suggest the fusion of two religious and intellectual traditions in carving out the Asian-Christian identity by stating that: "Putting it differently, strands of Judaeo-Christian tradition and one or more strands of the Hindu heritage act together upon our mental constructs and thereby constitute our very hermeneutical situation, that is, the situation out of which we orient our lives and understand who we are and what the realities around us are."[19] Duraisingh also argues that:

> reflective Indian-Christians frequently acknowledge that the Indian-Christian community is heir to two religious and intellectual traditions, namely, the complex religio-cultural symbol system known as the Hindu tradition and various strands of the Judaeo-Christian tradition that have shaped the Indian Church. . . It seems to me that the two traditions operate, whether one is conscious of it or not, as inseparable *co-efficients* or *co-determinants* of the Indian-Christian ethos. In other words, these two traditions function as dual co-ordinates of a single process of our understanding of ourselves and the realities around us.[20]

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[19] Christopher Duraisingh, "Indian hyphenated Christians and theological reflections: a New Expression of Identity," *Religion and Society*, 26:4 (December, 1979), p. 97.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

According to Duraisingh, the two different religious traditions operate simultaneously in the cognitive process of Indian-Christians and in that sense, the Indian-Christians can be described as natives in both traditions.[21] However, it is incorrect to argue in the Korean context that the Asian-Christian identity embraces the two different religious traditions, for it should be a matter of choice and religious commitment to become a Christian in the multi-religious milieu of Korea.[22] It is thus a oxymoron to describe the Asian-Christian identity as the fusion of two religious traditions.

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[21] *Ibid.*, p. 99.

[22] When we refer to the hyphenated identity of an Asian who becomes a Christian, it means that the person is already converted to Christianity. What we need to ask is the nature of the conversion in the Asian multi-religious milieu. The hyphenated identity of an Asian-Christian implies a personal resolution to accept the Christian teaching rather than other Asian religions. In this connection, it is relevant to examine Archie C. C. Lee's recent article on the similar issue.

In his article, "Cross-Textual Hermeneutics on Gospel and Culture," *AJT* 10/1 (1996), pp. 38-48, Archie Lee shares an episode related to his parents' conversion to Christianity: "At the time when my parents, who were living in Mainland China, were converted to Christianity, the pastor and the 'army' of Christians of the Church marched to our house to demand that all ancestral tablets, family altars and art, literature, and household items including furniture, beddings, bowls and chopsticks that bore the dragon image, were to be surrendered and then destroyed, smashed and burnt completely in front of the house. Those 'Christian soldiers' won a triumphant battle in destroying the symbols of our cultural heritage and especially the symbol of the dragon that once represented blessing and good omen in the culture of the new converts, but which was regarded as evil and wicked in the western Christian teaching of that time" (p. 40). What Lee describes here is not something particular only to the Chinese people, for we have numerous similar stories in Korea during the last one-hundred-year history of Protestant Church. Lee perceives this story as an example that shows an experience of cultural alienation and identity denial that is embedded in Christian teaching. To him the Chinese Christian had a double conversion both to the Christianity as religious faith and to Christian culture which could not be separated form Western civilisation. (p. 38.) Though Lee's observation seems to be partially correct, we may point out at least three things concerning his reflection on the theological implication of his parents' experience. First, as Lee himself does not allude to any form of resistance on the part of his parents against the "demand" to destroy the traditional religious symbols, we may acknowledge the fact that such things could happen only with the consent of his parents who newly converted to Christianity. It will be wrong to give the impression that the newly converted Asian Christians were forced to perform such demonstration against their will. This implies that an Asian Christian who destroyed the traditional religious symbols chose the "cultural alienation and identity denial" of his own accord. Secondly, the commitment to the Christian faith in the Asian multi-religious context does not mean exclusively a matter of personal preference, but has wider social implications. When a person accepts the Christian faith in spite of the dominant influence of the traditional religions, it implies that he himself came to consider the traditional teachings as ineffective and impotent to lead the people's spiritual world. Lee's parents, in front of whose house the destruction of symbols was performed, were actually announcing both their new allegiance to the Christian faith and their negation of former allegiance to the traditional religious faith to the public. This may be understood as an Asian way of expressing a new religious loyalty. Lee holds that this is an act of destroying 'the symbols of the Chinese *cultural* heritage', but it should be made clear that his parents were not rejecting their *cultural* heritage but their *religious* heritage. At the same time, it must be pointed out that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as negating the whole of Chinese cultural heritage. Such a thing actually does not and cannot happen. What is negated is only part of the religious heritage that are not compatible with the Christian faith. In other words, the Asian Christians abandoned what have been the objects of worship within the traditional religions, not the

At any rate, it seems necessary to examine how some Asian theologians explain the fusion of the two religious traditions. In the context of arguing for inter-faith dialogue, Ariarajah expresses his perception of religion: "Religion is the manifestation of the faith of a people in history at a particular time and place, and by virtue of necessity, it expresses itself in thought forms, symbols and rites that are prevalent in the culture, religion and culture each exerting mutual influence over the other. There can be nothing sacrosanct, therefore, about its form, mode or life."[23] To support his argument, Ariarajah presents different ways of explaining the human predicament and salvation among religions. In Christianity, human predicament and the way to overcome it are explained by the formula of "creation-fall-redemption." In Hinduism, human predicament is caused by *avidya* (ignornace) that hinders the realisation of one's unity with Brahman (the ultimate reality) and in Buddhism, it is explained in terms of *anicca*, *anatta* and *dukkha*. Based on this observation, Ariarajah argues that the Christian explanation is not the only true description of human predicament. The validity of the Christian description of human predicament is thus seriously challenged. According to Ariarajah, "when the claim of superiority of one religious tradition over others is discarded, mutual correction and enrichment among them will become possible." In this case, the Asian hyphenated Christian is to be situated in a religiously neutral zone. What the Asian-Christian can do in that situation is not an authentic Asian form of Christian theology, but a comparative study of religions.

The horizon of the Korean people is a thought-world that provides them the hermeneutical framework to perceive the world in a meaningful way. It may be described as the collective experience of the Korean people accumulated through their history in the form of their national intellectual and historical heritage. The fusion of

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whole religio-cultural heritage. The misperception of this rejection of the traditional religio-cultural heritage by Asian Christians has caused a lot of reactions on the part of the Asian theologians. Although, by accepting the Christian faith, important aspects of the traditional religious faith had to be rejected, much of the religio-cultural heritage that has constituted part of the life and language of Asian people cannot be eradicated from the body and mind of the Asian-Christians. In this sense, Lee's observation that to become a Christian in the Asian context one had to throw out the whole cultural heritage does not convey the true picture. Thirdly, though it may be true that the imitation of Western civilisation that provoked blame from fellow Chinese people is connected with the Christian culture, it must not be overlooked that there could be other aspects in this issue. It is hard to argue that Christians were the only group of people who accepted Western civilisation with the Christian culture. Regardless of their acceptance of the Christian faith, those who opted for the establishment of relationships with foreign countries were also susceptible to Western influences.

[23] S. Wesley Ariarajah, "Towards a Theology of Dialogue," *The Ecumenical Review* (Jan., 1977), p. 5.

Christianity and the thought-world of the Korean as well as of Asian peoples is not meant to be a mere cognitive comparison of religious concepts found in the East Asian religio-cultural tradition with those in the Christian tradition.[24] What we need to do is to explore the minds of the Korean people and of Asian peoples so as to identify their actual beliefs which provide the framework to accept Christianity on the folk level. After that, we will be able to bring about a creative fusion between Christianity and the Asian minds and carve a new identity for the Asian hyphenated Christian.

b) *Discovery of the Asian Hyunjang*

The horizon of Asian theologians also includes the historical heritage and the present socio-economic realities of the Asian peoples. If the authentic Asian form of theology is not to be alienated from the life-situations of the Asian people, it must emerge from within the concrete historical contexts of the Asian people. Theology must deal with the questions arising out of these concrete historical realities.

In the report of the second theological seminar-workshop on the theme of 'Doing Theology with Asian Folk Literature,' C. S. Song observes an important thing concerning Third World theology: "One of the common factors underlying Third World theology is the emphasis on people – men, women and children who love and hate, laugh and weep, dream and despair. Theology has at last located its subject!"[25] Song also argues that everything that has to do with the life of people can and should be the subject of our theological concern, for theology divorced from the life and history of the people will die.[26]

If we relocate the locus of doing theology from the secluded space of the academic guild to the life-situations of the people, we may be faced with a lot of questions, either individually or nationally. Once the locus of doing theology is shifted, it will be

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[24] In this regard, it is interesting to note C. S. Song's criticism of western theology. In the context of his criticism of western theology that maintains its militant spirit and imposes its norms on the people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, Song observes that "the Christianization of indigenous culture, in most cases, did not take place as it did in Europe." As an example of this, he points to the fact that "Confucius has never become a part of theological thinking for the Chinese church as Aristotle became dominant in the formation of Roman Catholic theology, especially that of Thomas Aquinas." Here, Song seems to suggest that Chinese theology must incorporate Chinese philosophy into its theological discourse.

[25] Song, "Let us do Theology with Asian Resources," p. 205.

necessary to change the audience of theology. The theological questions must be the issues related to the life of the people and the result of the theological reflections on those issues must be returned to the people. Song has also suggested that Asian theology should not only speak out of Asian humanity but also speak back to it.[27]

Here, it is worth quoting in full how John Mbiti, an African theologian,dramatically describes the impotence of western theology in the life-situation of an African people.

> He learned German, Greek, French, Latin, Hebrew in addition to English, church history, systematic, homiletics, exegesis, and pastoralia, as one part of the requirements of his degree. The other part, his dissertation, he wrote on some obscure theologian of the Middle Ages. Finally he got what he wanted: a Doctorate in theology. It took him nine and a half years altogether. . . He was anxious to reach home as soon as possible, so he flew, and he was glad to pay his excess baggage, which after all consisted only of the Bible in the various languages he had learned, plus Bultmann, Barth, Bonhoeffer, Brunner, Buber, Cone, Kung, Moltmann, Niebuhr, Tillich, *Christianity Today*, *Time Magazine*. . . At home relatives, neighbors, old friends, dancers, musicians, drums, dogs, cats, all gather to welcome him back. . . . Suddenly there was a shriek; someone has fallen to the ground. It is his older sister, now a married woman with six children and still going strong. He rushes to her. People make room for him and watch him. 'Let's take her to the hospital' he calls urgently. They are stunned. He becomes quiet. They all look at him bending over her. Why doesn't someone respond to his advice? Finally a schoolboy says 'Sir, the nearest hospital is 50 miles away and there are few buses that go there.' Someone else says 'She is demon-possessed. Hospitals will not cure her!' The chief says to him, 'You have been studying theology overseas for 10 years, now help your sister. She is troubled by the spirit of her great-aunt.' He looks around. Slowly he goes to get Bultmann, looks at the index, finds what he wants, reads again about spirit possession in the New Testament. Of course he gets the answer: Bultmann has demythologised it. He insists that his sister is not possessed. The people shout 'Help your sister, she is possessed.' He shouts back, 'But Bultmann has demythologised demon possession.' . . . Fantasy? No, these are the *realities* of our time.[28]

If we may transpose what Mbiti emphasise here, it seems that Asian theology should begin with the discovery of Asian realities and Asian ethos. Asian theology must provide answers to Asian questions. In other words, Asian theologians must address the questions arising from the life-situations of Asian peoples.

The theological challenge that seeks creativity in building an Asian way of doing theology can be summarised in the following way. 1) Doing theology in Asia should

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[26] Song, "Jesus Christ-The Life of the World-and Asian Meditation," *EAJT* 1 (1983), p. 20.

[27] Song, "Let us do Theology with Asian Resources," p. 204.

not be alienated from the life-situations of the people. The locus of doing theology in Asia must not be confined to the academic guild, characterised by mere exchange of ideas among scholars, but take place where we encounter the life of the people. 2) Doing theology in Asia must have the people as its audience. The cognitive comparison between Christianity and the religious, cultural and intellectual traditions in Asia will not benefit the Asian people, for it will again become a neutral, detached and objective study of the Asian material. We need to articulate Christianity in a way which makes it contextually-relevant, being faithful to the Gospels at the same time. By doing so, we can relate Christianity meaningfully to the life and thought of Asian peoples. Here, it is worth quoting Jean-Marc Ela whose struggle for African Christianity finds echos even in the Asian context:

> If Christianity wants to reach Africans, to speak to their hearts, and to enter their consciousness and the space where their soul breathes, it must change. To do so, Christianity must do violence to itself and break the chains of Western rationality, which means almost nothing in the African civilization of the symbol. Without some form of epistemological break with the Scholastic universe, Christianity has little chance of reaching the African. Catholicism has made the language of Aristotle its official theological language. Yet Jesus of Nazareth, whose manner of speech echoed that of peasants and shepherds, did not use it; neither do Blacks in Africa.[29]

Similarly, Christianity must do violence to itself by being fused with the Asian thought-worlds and the way of doing theology must break the rules of Western theology, discover contextually relevant questions for theological reflections and speak back to the people. I hope that the image of the historical Jesus as '*mokmin* Jesus' would capture the mind of the Korean people and, at the same time, faithfully re-present the teachings of Jesus as reported in the Gospels, thus bringing the two horizons into fusion.

Fusion of Concepts of the Bible

When we refer to the multi-religious milieu in Asia, we also refer to the fact that Asian people have been nourished by the various sacred scriptures of Asian religions. Some Asian theologians argue that the authority of the Christian Bible should be relativised

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[28] John Mbiti, "Theological Impotence and the Universality of the Church," *Mission Trends No. 3: Third World Theologies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 6-8.

in the multi-religious context of Asia. However, does this argument for the relativisation of the Bible truly represent the Asian ethos concerning a religious book? Is the biblical authority relativised in the Asian multi-religious milieu? Or, on the contrary, is it guaranteed? I find no difficulty in accepting the claim that the authority of the Bible must be re-defined against the background of the Asian religious context. However, the assertion that the Bible cannot have any unique authority in the Asian religious context does not reflect the Asian religious sentiment, but simply reveals the fact that Asian theologians themselves are alienated from the Asian religious context.

a) *Bible as the Christian Gyung.* In the religious and intellectual tradition in Korea, those books given the name *Gyung* (pronounced as *Ching* in Chinese) are accepted as books that contain the fundamental truth of the universe and thus are granted the eternal relevance transcending the limit of time and space.[30] The Bible is given the name *S'ong Gyung*, i.e., the sacred *Gyung*, in Korean, so its authority is accepted by the Korean people and its eternal relevance is hardly challenged both by the faith community and also by those outside the Christian faith community. The Bible is a "sacred book" in the Asian religious milieu.[31] In some sense, it is correct to argue that

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[29] Jean-Marc Ela, *My Faith as an African* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 41-42.

[30] We may refer to James Barr who analyses how relativism has affected Western Christians in their view on the Bible in the modern times. Cf. James Barr, *The Bible in the Modern World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 11. According to Barr, the normativity of the Bible is rejected because the Bible is a past book that is culturally and historically conditioned. There exists no possibility to bridge the pastness of the Bible and its normative character in the modern society. Barr holds that it is simply irrational to hold that a book produced in one cultural context has a decisive authority for the people living in another cultural context. (p. 42.) He suggests we abandon the expectation that the Bible will provide right and authoritative directions for modern people, because only then can we have a clear understanding of the real nature of the Bible. The Bible has to be relativized as a book "belonging to an environment entirely different from our own, in which the questions and answers also were entirely different." (p. 43.)

Within the faith community in Korea, however, it is unimaginable that the theologian-scholar who belongs to a faith community challenges the authority of the *Gyung* of that religion. If he challenges the authority of the sacred book, it indicates that he does not accept the authority of its teachings any more and so he abandons his faith in the religious teachings. In Asian religious milieu, we never hear of any Buddhist who rejects the authority of *Bul-Gyung*s, i.e., Buddhist sacred books, openly still claims to be a Buddhist.

[31] Kwok Pui Lan, "Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World," p. 34, observes that in Asia the concept of 'scripture' did not exist. She argues that the notion of 'scripture' was culturally conditioned and cannot be found in Hinduism or Confucianism. According to Kwok, that explains why the Asian religions have relatively more fluidity and are able to assimilate visions with other traditions. She holds that the Bible is not sacred, but only one form of human construction to talk about God. However, by arguing that "the various stories that contain both the liberation of women

the Bible must be treated as 'one of the sacred scriptures' in Asia. However, the religious implications of this argument should not be misunderstood, for it does not relativise the biblical authority but rather guarantees it in the Asian religious milieu.[32] It is significant to note that at the end of his discussion on the relative authority of the Bible in Asia, Samartha himself has to acknowledge the fact that "the Bible remains normative for all Christians in all spaces and at all times, because it bears witness to God's dealings with the whole world and to Jesus Christ, his life and death, and resurrection, his deeds and teachings, thus providing the basis for Christian theological reflection."[33]

Our criticism of minjung theology is that it has failed to present a holistic image of the historical Jesus as reported in the Gospels. This failure is connected with the understanding of biblical authority in minjung theology. It is Nam-Dong Suh who emphasises that the central character of minjung theology was its socio-economic hermeneutics. It has been his consistent argument that the task of minjung theologians is to do theology from a socio-economic perspective.[34] According to Suh, theologians must be liberated from the traditional deductive method and speculative formulations of theology so as to embrace the inductive and social-scientific method that leads to the praxis of theology.[35] He believes that doing theology with the social-scientific and socio-cultural approach means none other than the announcement of a decisive separation from the traditional way.[36] Drawing on this, he argues that minjung theology is the theology of the post-Christian era, which will emerge only after the collapse of Christianity and the appearance of the post-Christian era on the global stage.[37] Suh's definition and understanding of minjung theology necessarily entails a radical change in the view of biblical authority. Minjung theologians cease to view the

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and other cultural situations must be regarded as 'sacred' *as the biblical stories*" (emphasis mine), she contradicts her own argument inacknowledging the sacredness of the Bible.

[32] *Contra* S. J. Samartha, *One Christ—Many Religions*, pp. 58-75.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[34] N. Suh, "Speaking on Minjung Theology," p. 164.

[35] Suh, "Cross - Actualization of Resurrection," (in Korean) in *Studies on Minjung Theology*, p. 317.

[36] Suh, "The Task of Minjung Theology as a Korean Theology," *Shinhak Sasang* (Theological Thought), 24 (1979), p. 126.

historical narratives and sayings as God's self-revelation, but as one of the reference books which show aspects of minjung movements emerging in particular socio-economic situations. The normative authority of the Bible is denied by minjung theologians:

> In the traditional theology they only use such expressions as 'absolute revelation' or 'norms of theology' in referring to the Bible. They never refer to the Bible as a 'point of reference'. The conservative theologians hold on to the biblical authority. But the view that the Bible is the absolute norm is denied by the Bible itself. . . So I rather take the Bible only as a point of reference. In other words, the Bible is only a reference book.[38]

Kyung-Yeon Chon criticises minjung theologians for using the Bible selectively: "Minjung theologians do not listen to the voice of the whole Bible, but presents those passages that support their argument as biblical points of reference. . . Minjung Theology does not listen to the Bible, but flatters the taste of the public."[39] Although this is a valid criticism, we need to pay attention to the religious and intellectual ethos of the Korean people to situate the theological position of minjung theologians concerning biblical authority. Such a selective use of the biblical material by minjung theologians may be required to support their presentation of Jesus as a minjung Jesus, but it does not represent the religious and intellectual ethos of the Korean people, particularly those of the Christian faith.

b) *Bible as a Historical Book.* The Bible in the Asian multi-religious context must be accepted primarily as a Christian *Gyung*, but the concept of *Gyung* does not exhaust the description of the nature of the Bible. The Bible is a historical document,[40] written in a particular historical and cultural milieu. In East Asia, therefore, the Bible must be defined as a Christian *Gyung* which is given in the concrete historical and cultural situations. In this sense, we may describe the Bible as the religious-historical book of the Christian faith community. As the Bible is the Christian *Gyung,* its eternal

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[37] Suh, "Confluence of Two Stories," pp. 62ff.

[38] Suh, "Speaking on Minjung Theology," p. 184.

[39] Kyung-Yeon Chon, *A Study on Minjung Theology*, p. 71-79.

[40] "The Bible and Theology in Asia Today: Declaration of the Sixth Asia Theological Association Theological Consultation," in Bong-Rin Ro and Ruth Eshenaur (eds.), *The Bible and Theology in Asian Contexts*, p. 5.

relevance is not questioned. But, as the Bible is also a historical book, its culture-related teachings requires us to employ the historical research of the biblical text. Here, the creative reflections of the Asian Christian theologians are needed.

Fusion of Hermeneutical Traditions

Asian theologians have argued for the necessity of developing hermeneutical tools to achieve the fusion of horizons, i.e., theology and the Asian *hyunjang* of religio-cultural and socio-economic world of the Asian peoples. The first task is to articulate the way the Bible is read in the Asian context. Samartha describes the task as follows:

> How can the Bible, a Semitic book formed through oral and written traditions in an entirely different geographic, historical, and cultural context, appropriated and interpreted for so many centuries by the West through hermeneutic tools designed to meet different needs and shaped by different historical factors, now be interpreted in Asia by Asian Christians for their own people?[41]

The challenge of finding an authentic Asian way of reading the Bible demands the creative engagement of Asian theologians. For this task, we first need to identify the hermeneutical issue of Asian peoples.

a) *The Hermeneutical Issue in East Asia*

The hermeneutical question that western theologians, evangelical and non-evangelical alike, have to answer is, how to bridge the gap between the horizon of the Bible and that of the interpreter? This hermeneutical question is closely related to the crisis of biblical authority, for the Bible is perceived to be the product of a different cultural and historical context.[42] William Larkin, Jr. describes the crisis as follows:

> Contemporary interpreters, especially those concerned with the mission of the church across cultures, are also aware of a gap that yawns between the culture in which the Bible was written and to which it was originally addressed, and the contemporary

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[41] Samartha, *One Christ—Many Religions*, p. 66.

[42] See William J. Larkin, Jr., *Culture and Biblical Hermeneutics. Interpreting and Applying the Authoritative Word in a Relativistic Age* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), pp. 17-28, for a brief summary of the crisis of biblical authority and the hermeneutical task for both the non-evangelical and evangelical theologians.

cultures to which the Word must now be addressed and in which it must be understood and applied.[43]

The hermeneutical issue in the West is concerned with the historical distance and the cultural difference between the ancient text and the modern interpreter.[44]

In Korea, as in Asia generally, however, the hermeneutical issue is the opposite of that in the West. The hermeneutical question that we have to answer in Korea is not how to *bridge* the gap between the horizon of the text and that of the modern interpreter, but how to *distance* the two horizons that exist already fused in the mind of the interpreter.

b) *Hermeneutical Traditions in East Asia*

Many Asian theologians have voiced their discontent with the traditional ways of interpreting the Bible as developed in the West, and emphasise the necessity of finding an Asian hermeneutical model.[45] Sugirtharajah observes that Asia has a long tradition of scriptural interpretation 'before the advent of the critical tools and hermeneutical devices of the West'.[46] Samartha also refers to the existence of the hermeneutical tradition in Asian religions: "Christians must recognise that neighbours of other faiths in Asia, whether it is Hindu and Buddhist neighbours in India or Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist in China, have developed their own hermeneutics in their own setting, without depending on external sources."[47] As the issue of inter-faith dialogue goes beyond the scope of this study, we will only try to clarify two things in connection with Samartha's argument. First, it is one thing to demand that Asian-Christians recognise

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[43] Larkin, *ibid.*, p. 17.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[45] Among many, see Christopher Duraisingh, "Reflections on Theological Hermeneutics in the Indian Context," *Indian Journal of Theology* 31 (1981), pp. 259-278; Paulos Gregorios, "The Hermeneutical Discussion in India Today," *Indian Journal of Theology* 31 (1982), pp. 153-155; Kwok Pui Lan, "Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World," pp. 25-42; Archie C. C. Lee, "Biblical Interpretation in Asian Perspectives," pp. 35-39; Stanley J. Samartha, "Religion, Language and Reality: Towards a Relational Hermeneutics," *Biblical Interpretation* 2:3 (1994), pp. 340-362; George M. Soares-Prabhu, "Towards an Indian Interpretation of the Bible," *Biblebhashyam* 6 (1980), pp. 151-170; R. S. Sugirtharajah, "The Bible and Its Asian Readers," *Biblical Interpretation* 1:1 (1993), pp. 54-66.

[46] Sugirtharajah, "The Bible and its Asian Readers," p. 54.

the existence of other hermeneutical traditions in the other faith communities in Asia, and it is completely another thing to suggest that Asian-Christians should be "open to different religious and cultural insights in the matter of interpreting the texts."[48] Secondly, as the different religious traditions have developed their own hermeneutics 'without depending on external sources', it is not right to suggest that Christian hermeneutics in Asia should be open to those *external sources*, i.e., to the different religious and cultural insights. Here, we notice that an authentic Asian way of reading the Bible is not yet articulated *from inside* the Asian multi-religious context. In other words, though Asian theologians express their discontent with the interpretative tools as developed in the West, they do not present an authentically Asian way of reading the Bible. At this point, it is necessary to sketch briefly the hermeneutical tradition in Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism in East Asia that, as Samartha notes, has exerted a dominant influence on East Asian civilisation for thousands of years 'before the advent of the critical tools and hermeneutical devices of the West'.

The "Hsin" ('mind') School in Neo-Confucinism. Neo-Confucianism, which emerged during the Sung Dynasty (A. D. 960-1279) in China, had two schools: *Li* ('law') school (or School of Law) and *Hsin* school (or School of Mind). It is the *Hsin* school that exerted a great influence in traditional Chinese hermeneutics through its basic tenets which were initiated by Ch'eng Hao (1032-1085), continued by Lu Chiu-yuan (1139-1193) and completed by Wang Shou-jen (or Wang Yang-ming, 1473-1529).[49]

The hermeneutical concern in the *Hsin* school or the School of Mind is not language or text *per se*, but the 'behind-the-term' meaning or concept. According to Lu Chiu-yuan, there is no distinction between 'my mind' and 'the universe': "The universe is my mind; my mind is the universe."[50] While reading an expositor who remarked, "What comprises the four points of the compass together with what is above and below: this is called *yu*. What comprises past, present, and future: this is

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[47] Samartha, *One Christ--Many Religions*, p. 60.

[48] Samartha, "The Asian Context: Sources and Trends," in R. S. Sugirtharajah (ed.) *Voices from the Margin*, p. 46.

[49] Fung Yu-Lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. by Derk Bodde (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 281.

[50] *Collected Works of Lu Hsiang-shan, chuan* 36. Cited in Fung Yu-Lan, *ibid.*, p. 307.

called *chou*,"[51] Lu experiences enlightenment and says: "All affairs within the universe come within the scope of my duty; the scope of my duty includes all affairs within the universe."[52] The space where the fusion between the universe and myself occurs is 'my mind.' There is no historical distance in the space of 'my mind', for the universe, i.e., the totality of space and time, is fused with the Self. This hermeneutical position is further developed by Wang Yang-ming who argues that apart from the mind, neither law nor object exists. The key concept in Wang's philosophy is the 'intuitive knowledge',[53] and thus he had a "suspicion of language".[54] According to Wang, what we have to do is to develop 'the intuitive knowledge' of the mind through calm meditation.

The Hermeneutical Principle in Taoism. We need to refer to Lao-tsu and Chuang-tsu to identify the hermeneutical epistemology in Chinese philosophy. We may find the gist of Taoist hermeneutics in the first sentence of *Tao-Te-Ching*: "The *Tao* that can be comprised in words is not the eternal *Tao*."[55] Lao-tsu differentiates the conceptualised *Tao* and the real *Tao*. If once the Tao is expressed in words and conceptualised, it becomes fossilised and cannot represent the eternal *Tao* any more. Here, we also find the "suspicion of language", for understanding should occur outside the horizon of human language. So, Lao-tsu uses aphorism, apothegms, allusions and illustrations in his writings.[56] Although the validity of language is not denied completely, Chuang-tsu also regards language as a 'means' to obtain the idea:

> A basket is for catching fish, but when one has got the fish, one need think no more about the basket. A foot-trap is for catching hares; but when one has got the hare, one need think no more about the trap. Words are for holding ideas, but when one has got the

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[51] The term '*yu-chou*' means 'the universe'.

[52] *Collected Works of Lu Hsiang-shan, chuan* 33. Cited in Fung Yu-Lan, *ibid.*, p. 307.

[53] Fung Yu-Lan, *ibid.*, pp. 312-313.

[54] David S. Nivison, "The Problem of 'Knowledge' and 'Action' in Chinese Thought Since Wang Yang-ming," in Arthur F. Wright (ed.), *Studies in Chinese Thought* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1953), p. 115.

[55] Fung Yu-Lan, *ibid.*, p. 94.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

> idea; one need no longer think about the words. If only I could find someone who had stopped thinking about words and could have him with me to talk to![57]

According to Chuang-tsu, words are something to be forgotten when they have achieved their purpose. To talk with someone who has stopped thinking about words is to talk without words. Hence, it is the suggestiveness of words, not their fixed denotations or connotations, that reveal the Tao.[58] This idea is further developed in the thirteenth chapter of *Chuang-tsu*.

> This generation believes that the value of the *Tao* is to be found in books. But books are nothing more than words, and words have value but only in terms of their meaning. Meaning is constantly seeking to express what cannot be said in words and thus passed on. This generation values words and puts them into books, yet what it values is perhaps mistaken, because what it values is not really all that valuable. So we look at things and see things, but it is only an outward form and colour, and what can be heard is just the name and sound. How sad that this generation imagines that the form, colour, name and sound are enough to capture the essence of something! The form, colour, name and sound are in no way sufficient to capture or convey the truth, which is why it is said that the knowledgeable do not speak and those who speak are not knowledgeable. But how can this generation understand this?[59]

Here, we read that Chuang-tsu does not grant primary importance to words. As he expresses the hope of talking with someone who transcends words, Chuang-tsu emphasises only the existential perception of the meaning behind the words and language.[60]

We may summarise this brief survey of Taoist hermeneutical principles by saying that Taoist hermeneutics are not interested in reason and logic but in perception of the 'behind-the-term' reality or substance.

Zen Buddhism. The hermeneutical principle in Zen Buddhism is summarised in the following four tenets: 1) From mind to mind it was transmitted; 2) Not expressed in

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[57] *Chuang-tsu*, chapter 26. Cited in Fung Yu-Lan, *ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

[58] Fung Yu-Lan, *ibid.*, p. 13.

[59] "Heaven's Tao," *The Book of Chuang Tzu*, tr. by Martin Palmer with Elizabeth Breuilly (London: The Penguin Group, 1996), pp. 114-115.

[60] Cf. Yong-Ok Kim, "A Historical Survey of Hermeneutical Theories in the East and in the West," (in Korean) in *Jolcha Takma Daeki Mansung* (Seoul: Tongnamu, 1987), pp. 55-56.

words or written in letters; 3) It was a special transmission apart from the sacred teaching; and 4) Directly point to the human mind, see one's real nature and become an enlightened Buddha.[61] The enlightenment is not achieved through reason or logic, but through intuition. Song observes that the enlightenment of the mind is expressed with the concept of *satori* in Zen Buddhism.[62] According to Daisetz Suzuki, *satori* is defined as "an intuitive looking into the nature of things in contradistinction to the analytical or logical understanding of it. Practically, it means the unfolding of a new world hitherto unperceived in the confusion of a dualistically trained mind."[63] Song further explains the concept of *satori* in the following way:

> *Satori* opens for us a door into the dimension of things hidden from us so far, It enables us to see the reality behind and beyond phenomena and to penetrate the barriers that hinder us from seeing the true nature of things. Needless to say, this *satori* is akin to the revelation on which Christian faith depends. Revelation does not come at the end of logical reasoning. It is not bound or controlled by logic. It is not restricted by the norms within which human logic operates. It comes to you at the moment you least expect it.[64]

Song argues that the person who has experienced *satori* is given a third-eye that will enable him to perceive reality 'behind and beyond phenomena.' What is emphasised in Zen Buddhism is not the human reason or logic, but intuition that rules human mind, thought and action.

III. For an Asian Hermeneutic

Based on the survey of the hermeneutical traditions in East Asia, we may agree with Samartha that: "The question in Asia is not so much rules of interpretation as the perception of Truth or Sat or Reality or Dharma or the Tao itself. How Reality is to be perceived is a concern prior to questions of rules of interpreting the scriptures."[65] It is quite natural for an Asian-Christian theologian, who is part of the hermeneutical

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[61] Takakusu Junjiro, *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*, ed. Wing-tsit Chan and Charles A. Moore (Honolulu: Office Appliance, 1956), p. 163.

[62] Song, *Third-Eye Theology*, p. 46.

[63] Daisetz T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, First Series (London: Luzac & Company, 1927), p. 216. Cf. Song, *Third-Eye Theology*, p. 46.

[64] Song, *ibid.*, p. 46.

tradition sketched above, to express discontent with the hermeneutical tools developed in the West for reading the Bible, the sacred book of the Christian faith community. Here, we note the suggestion of Soares-Prabhu who attempts to bring the two hermeneutical tradition into fusion. He asserts that historical criticism does not measure up to the nature of the Bible and is so ineffective as an interpretative tools in reading the Bible: "Historical criticism uses historical methods to interpret a religious text. A method fashioned to obtain exact information is being used to interpret a text which aims at the personal transformation of the reader through his response in faith. The method thus does not measure up to the intention of the text."[66] However, he rejects sticking to the Indian hermeneutical tradition for biblical interpretation, for "an Indian exegesis cannot be an exotic plant growing in isolation out of humid soil of traditional Indian methods of interpretation"[67] Rather, he proposes a "cross fertilization of modern methods of biblical exegesis with the Indian exegetical tradition."[68]

Christianity in the multi-religious milieu of East Asia must be relevant to the life and thought of Asian peoples. We suggest that this is the way to prevent the Christian theology from being alienated from the life-situations of Asian peoples. Insofar as we are concerned about relevance, we can "avoid the academic barrenness which afflicts 'scientific' exegesis."[69] As the study of the sacred books in the Asian religious milieu was never a mere academic exercise to gain knowledge, the reading of the Bible must be connected with the living realities of Asian peoples. The traditional way of reading the sacred books can help a lot in perceiving the 'behind-the-term' reality that transcends the historical and cultural contingency. However, as the Bible is a historical book, we acknowledge that more than the subjective and intuitive reading of the Bible is required. The 'Declaration of the Sixth Asia Theological Association Theological Consultation' well describes the situation:

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[65] Samartha, *One Christ--Many Religions*, p. 61.

[66] Soares-Prabhu, "Towards An Indian Interpretation of the Bible," p. 156.

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

[68] *Ibid.*

[69] *Ibid.*

> To refrain from any purely subjective interpretation of the Bible, we endorse the traditional grammatico-historical approach to the text as our objective reference. However, we acknowledge that grammatico-historical understanding of the text is not yet full understanding. A fuller understanding is realised only when we are confronted with the Word which has become flesh, that is, when the meaning of the text grasps us in our own situation.[70]

Minjung theologians never suggest the use of traditional East Asian hermeneutics in their theological reflections. However, we cannot fail to notice that the perception of the historical Jesus as a 'minjung Jesus' discloses the influence of traditional East Asian hermeneutics, for minjung theologians did not obtain their perception through a logical analysis of the text but through a sort of *satori* that made them pay attention to the minjung reality behind the text. In the context of recounting the hermeneutical background of minjung theology, Ahn states that "before the theological reflections of minjung theologians there existed minjung movement; before the texts that report the minjung events in words, there existed minjung events, and not *vice versa*."[71] Ahn also refers to W. Brueggemann's *Hopeful Imagination* to explain the background of his perception, but the fact is that we find the influence of traditional East Asian hermeneutics in his emphasis of the 'behind-the-text' minjung reality. The perception of the historical Jesus as a '*mokmin* Jesus' is also in the same line with the minjung perception of Jesus, for it is obtained through a sort of intuitive realisation of the teaching of Jesus before a careful exegesis of the biblical text. In this sense, the position of the *mokmin* perception of the historical Jesus is in tune with traditional East Asian hermeneutics. However, what we attempt to show in this thesis is that the perception of the historical Jesus based on traditional East Asian hermeneutics must be supported by the text itself. This is because we believe that an authentic Korean as well as an Asian description of the historical Jesus must be faithful both to the traditional East Asian hermeneutics and to the Gospels. I hope that the challenge to formulate Christian theology both relevant to the Asian mind and faithful to the Bible will inspire

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[70] "The Bible and Theology in Asia Today: Declaration of the Sixth Asia Theological Association Theological Consultation," in Bong-Rin Ro and Ruth Eshenaur (eds.), *The Bible and Theology in Asian Contexts*, p. 6.

[71] Byung-Mu Ahn, "Interpretive Method of the Bible in Minjung Theology," *Shinhak Sasang* ('Theological Thought'), 57 (Summer, 1987), p. 419.

Asian theologians to discover *not only* authentic Asian questions *but also* proper hermeneutical devices in answer to those questions.

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